

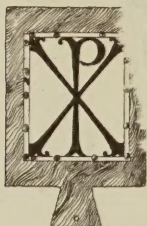
**GUIDING** *Children*  
**in Christian Growth**

---

**MARY ALICE JONES**

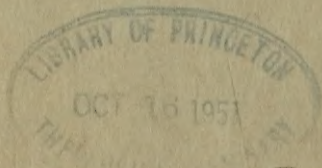
BV  
1475  
.J533  
1949  
c.2

Charles



Education Reading Room.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY



BV 1475 .J533 1949 c.2  
Jones, Mary Alice, 1898-  
Guiding children in  
Christian growth

# Guiding Children in Christian Growth

MARY ALICE JONES

C. A. BOWEN  
*General Editor*



Published for  
the Co-operative Publishing Association  
by  
ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS  
New York • Nashville

# GUIDING CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN GROWTH

COPYRIGHT MCMXLIX  
BY PIERCE & SMITH

All rights reserved, including that of translation  
into foreign languages, including the Scandinavian

B

SET UP, PRINTED, AND BOUND BY THE  
PARTHENON PRESS, AT NASHVILLE,  
TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## Contents

Introduction	5
I. The Growing Child	7
II. The Faith We Teach	15
III. Learning Through Fellowship—in the Family	33
IV. Learning Through Fellowship—in the Church	47
V. Learning Through Activities	62
VI. Learning Through the Arts	78
VII. Learning Through Worship	95
VIII. Using Prepared Lesson Materials	108
IX. The Teacher and the Church School Group	115
X. Evaluating the Results of Teaching	135
Appendices	147



## Introduction

PERSONS DO WHAT SEEMS TO THEM TO BE IMPORTANT. THEY talk about other matters; they praise ideas and programs or denounce them, debate them or pass resolutions about them. But on the matters which seem really important, they take action of one sort or another.

Those persons to whom children are important need no exhortation to give energy, time, money and talent—to give abundantly and without limitation—to further the growth and development of children. Earnest parents and teachers and friends of children need no urging to give more thought to children. And those who feel that religion is essential to the child's happiness and usefulness are, of all those concerned about the welfare of children, the most generous and devoted.

But it sometimes happens that persons who wish to show love to children, who yearn to be wise counselors, helpful leaders, dependable friends and teachers, find they need skills and insights that they do not possess. It is primarily to help these persons—those who do feel that children are important, and who do wish to help them—that this book is prepared. It makes no claim to give the final answers to all the perplexing problems in the field of education. It does not attempt to describe how a parent or teacher may successfully meet every situation which may arise in the experience of living with growing children. But it endeavors to point up a few principles which have proved helpful to other adults seeking to guide children, and to indicate some specific plans for teaching children in groups.

This book is planned especially for parents and teachers concerned with the religious nurture of children, at home and in the church. The chapters are prepared for reading and discussion. In the Appendix are included additional reading suggestions, sources of materials, and samples of children's work. For these interesting original writings the author is indebted to the children of the First Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut, and the director of religious education, Phyllis Maramarco.

*Mary Alice Jones*



## CHAPTER I

# The Growing Child

LESLIE LOOKED SERIOUSLY AT THE MARKS ON THE TREE trunk. Each birthday his daddy had marked his height on the tree. On this twelfth birthday, the steady but uneven progress of the marks up the tree trunk seemed to impress him strongly.

"It's a lot higher this year than last year," he said.

"Yes, Son. From eleven to twelve is a big jump."

There was a moment of silence, and then Leslie said rather shyly, "We can't make marks to show how much I have grown in knowing things, can we?"

"Not so easily as we can show how much you have grown in height," his father replied. "But Mother and I were talking just last night about it. We know you have grown in knowing things, even though we can't make marks on a chart to show just how much you have grown."

Leslie's father and mother did recognize that their son was growing in wisdom as well as in stature. And they were deeply concerned to provide all possibilities and opportunities for his growth in favor with God and man. They recognized that their son was a person, a whole person, indivisible, and they respected him as a person, just as truly as they loved him as their son.

Sometimes it seems that parents and teachers and other adults who love children are equally distressed at seeing them grow or at seeing them not grow! A parent whose child does not make normal progress in height from one year to the next anxiously seeks the doctor's advice. Yet the same parent often sighs about "losing my baby," as

she reluctantly puts aside last year's playsuit for the sturdier jeans demanded by this year's activities. The parent whose child seems to be slow about learning to read is deeply distressed. Yet the same parent often seems to find it difficult to accept the fact that the growth which enables the child to read calls also for expression in independent ideas.

The welfare of children calls for steady growth in all ways. It requires that each child be provided with all the nourishment and encouragement needed to promote growth. At the same time it requires that no one aspect of the child's personality be overdeveloped to the neglect of the rest. It requires that care be taken to avoid overstimulation which will push the child too rapidly. Those who are interested in a child's welfare wish to understand the normal rate of growth for children, so that they may know what to expect of their child. But they come to know, also, that each child has his own individual rate of growth. And so they do not go into a panic when their child is a little below the average, nor become smug when he is a little above.

### WHAT IS GROWTH?

Dead things do not grow. Growth is an expression of life. It takes place because the living organism has within itself the urge to grow. The growth of a child is, then, first of all something from within the child's own organism. That something is made to grow, it is pressing to grow, to extend itself. No outside conditions create this urge; it is given by the Creator, and every child has the urge to grow, to develop strength and new powers through exercise.

Though they do not create the possibility of growth, outside conditions may promote it or hold it back, for the child is a creature made to live in the world. His body is dependent upon the outside world for food. The human

body is not, like the plants and lower animals, able to get all its nourishment directly from the soil and sun and water. This makes children dependent for many years of their lives upon the help of adults to select and to supply the food that is nourishing.

Though food is necessary to growth, growth itself is one of the factors which determine whether a certain type of food will be good for an individual child. Not all nourishing food is good for all children at all ages. A baby requires special selection and special preparation of food; a toddler requires more, and may have wider variety; an older boy or girl requires a hardier diet.

But the child's growth is not limited to the expansion of his physical body through becoming taller and heavier and stronger. He is also growing in skills and in understanding. This is something more than physical development but it is dependent upon the body. Skill in the use of one's hands, and understanding of words and of ideas and of another person's needs, understanding even of the purposes of God, are dependent upon the growth of the physical brain and nervous system. We cannot separate the child's thinking and purposing from his physical body. Though the relationship between mind and body continues to be full of mystery, it is clear that there is such a relationship. If prolonged hunger or serious injury affect a child's brain or the infinitely complex system of nerves, the child is thereby limited in the development that is possible for him both in the skill of his hands and in the ability to understand the needs of his fellows or the purposes of God. This does not mean that great thoughts have never come from minds in hungry or tortured bodies. It does mean that unless the physical brain and nervous systems have been given an opportunity to develop, a child, by just the amount of the lack in such development, is forever handicapped in living life to the full.

But understanding another's needs and understanding

the purposes of God are dependent upon more than the physical development of brain and nerves. Understanding and spiritual insight need their own specific nourishment. A robust physical specimen of childhood may be merely a fine animal. To become a person who is sensitive to the needs of others and responsive to the will of God requires more than a sound brain in a sound body.

Are there, in these areas, urges from within to grow as there are in the physical area? Well, many parents and teachers sometimes doubt it! They feel that they are going "against nature" in their efforts to teach a three-year-old to take his turn on the slide, or to teach a seven-year-old to remember to think of his grandmother's headache while he is shouting in the yard, or to teach a ten-year-old to share his allowance with the starving children of some far-off country, or to pray for those who have despitely used him. And, in a sense, they are doing just that. For this child is rooted in his animal nature, and for him to seek his own advantage is natural. Yet it is an affirmation of the Christian faith that this child is more than an animal, that, along with his animal needs and capacity for growth, he is endowed by his Creator with certain capacities to rise above the natural man and to become a spiritual man. It is an affirmation of the Christian faith that the child is called to become a child of God, that he may, through the help of God, become responsive to his Father's will, eager to cooperate with his Father's purposes.

It seems to be the testimony of experience in dealing with children that there is, along with all the self-regarding urges, also the urge from within to be more than merely self-regarding. There does seem to be also the capacity to respond to the needs of others, and to the purposes of God—to grow in wisdom and in favor with God and man, as well as to grow in stature.

This capacity to grow spiritually must be nourished just as truly as must the capacity to grow physically. If



the physical child is denied nourishment, the frustrated urge to grow ends in the child's death. This cause and effect is so definite that it is easily understood. That the urge to grow in responsiveness to the needs of others and to the purposes of God may also be frustrated by lack of nourishment is not so clearly observable. But it is just as true.

Nourishment in spiritual growth, as in physical growth, must be provided in the light of the needs and capacities of a child of a given age. Over-stimulation may be as detrimental to the child's development as is malnutrition. To provide the needed spiritual nourishment to each child at each stage in his growth is the primary responsibility of Christian parents and teachers.

Growth, then, is evidence of life, and takes place when there is an urge within to move in a certain direction. But growth in human beings requires nourishment supplied from without. Physical growth is basic to all growth in persons, but it is not all that is required. There appear to be also, in human beings, urges to grow in understanding the needs of others and in ability to respond to God, the source of life. These urges to grow from the natural man to the spiritual man require nourishment appropriate for each stage of growth.

### HOW DOES GROWTH TAKE PLACE?

#### **Growth Is Gradual**

Leslie looked at the "birthday marks" on the tree, and noticed that he had grown year by year. This is the way of most growth—it is gradual. We "make" within a few hours or weeks or months an automobile or a tractor or even a great ship capable of carrying thousands of persons. Human beings are not "made" in this way. They grow from tiny cells, through the months of babyhood and through the years of childhood and the many more years

of adulthood. The growth is not sudden and dramatic; though the mother is sometimes startled at the rate of growth in her child. She says, "I can see him grow!" but she knows that she cannot. Even at its period of greatest rapidity, the physical growth of a child is slow and gradual.

### **Growth Is Uneven**

Yet there are spurts and there are periods of slowness in normal growth of children. Leslie saw that he had grown more rapidly from his eleventh to his twelfth birthday than he had grown during some other years. There seem to be plateaus upon which the growing child appears to rest for a while. There seem to be periods of very rapid growth when the family on a tight budget is hard pressed to keep John and Mary supplied with shoes and coats that are not too snug for comfort. In most children the slowing up in physical growth comes between the third and fifth years and between the eighth and ninth years; the periods of most rapid growth come in the first year, the sixth year, the eleventh year, and between the twelfth and fourteenth years.

Growth in understanding others and in responsiveness to the love and purposes of God is also gradual. One may not expect of the three-year-old the degree of insight into the need for quiet when mother is entertaining guests which one may expect of a twelve-year-old. A little child is not likely to become, suddenly, a full-grown man in responsiveness to the needs of others or to the will of God.

In religious insight and responsiveness there seem to be plateaus and periods of rapid growth, as there are in physical growth, though the two are not simultaneous. When the physical body is gaining height and weight rapidly, the child may seem to be more self-centered, less aware of spiritual values. There is no rigid "law of growth" which may be applied to spiritual development, but those who are concerned with the welfare of children will be

sympathetic when the rapidly growing child is cross, or tires easily, or seems to be going backward instead of forward in his desire to help others.

In the understanding of others and in responsiveness to the will of God there seem, too, to come to the growing child flashes of insight, moments of direct awareness of God and of his plan, an upsurge of desire to live as a child of God, to make God's will his own will. God speaks, and the child hears.

### **Each Child Has His Own Rate of Growth**

Babies vary in weight at birth, little children of the same chronological age vary in height, older boys and girls vary in the development of the physical characteristics of adolescence. These variations among children of the same age are sometimes very great. A boy of thirteen may be six feet, two inches in height, and his best friend, also a boy of thirteen, four feet, yet both be normal boys. One girl's figure may begin to develop at the age of ten, and another at the age of fourteen, yet both be normal girls. Pubescence varies from twelve to seventeen in boys and from nine to eighteen in girls.

These great variations in physical growth appear to have little influence upon the development of spiritual understanding and responsiveness. Yet they do suggest the need for caution in expecting all children of a given age to be at the same stage of religious development. To set a definite birthday as the time when a child may be expected to understand right and wrong, to be held accountable for acts which make another person unhappy, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, is just as unwise as to expect all thirteen-year-old boys to have attained the same height. There are averages for children of various ages, showing what may be reasonably expected in the way of thoughtfulness for others. But there are wide differences

among individual children, and some who mature more slowly reach a greater understanding later on.

It seems also to be true that some children have a greater capacity for sympathy and for spiritual insight than do others. They will ever be more full of compassion for suffering, more sensitive to the need of someone else, more aware of the voice of God speaking to them, than will other persons. These variations will have to be recognized and accepted by adults working with children.

### THE CHILD IN THE MIDST

This growing child with all his possibilities and all his limitations must be set squarely in the midst of all adult planning if Christian nurture is to be influential in his life. No program, no course of study, no methods, no services may be pronounced good except in relation to the child for whom intended. If they demand too much from him and so confuse him and depress him, then they hinder his growth. If they demand too little of him and so bore him or cause him to feel self-satisfied, then they fail to nourish him, hold back his growth. If they help that child to grow in understanding, in knowledge, in ability to cooperate with his fellow men, in responsiveness to the love and wisdom of God—if they help the child to be, at each stage of his growth, what God intended for him to be, and to move on from that stage of growth to the next—then they are good.



## CHAPTER II

# *The Faith We Teach*

SUSAN, AGED SIX, WAS TALKING WITH TEDDIE, AGED THREE.

"If you do that, God won't love you."

"Why?"

"Because it's bad."

Now, in this case, it was Susan, aged six, who was teaching theology. But often it is the mother or teacher, and it is of vital importance that they teach Christian theology. Vague feelings after God are not enough. Children need to know whom they can believe, and to be able to give expression to their faith.

### CAN RELIGIOUS FAITH BE TAUGHT?

One's religious faith is what one believes and the principles by which one lives. No person can hand over, ready made, his own faith to someone else, no matter how much he may wish to do so. There are, however, three ways in which he may seek to share his faith with others: he may attempt to express his faith in words which have meaning for someone else; he may invite others to participate with him in services, in silences, in ceremonies and sacraments which clarify or dramatize his faith; and he may express his faith in his everyday living by giving a concrete example of what it does for men.

### Expressing One's Faith in Words

It is not easy for most persons to express their faith clearly and simply. Creeds have developed in many branches of the Christian Church. These statements give

the members a specific expression of faith, help persons to summarize their experiences, to say what they mean, and, in the saying, to clarify meaning. The use of such creeds by persons gathered together for worship gives a sense of group support to one's faith and so strengthens it. In times of doubt or distress or despair, creeds may provide a confused person with something concrete to which he may cling—and so may enable him to come through the storm.

But such creeds may also become crutches upon which one hobbles about, using a faith that has never been made one's own, always depending upon someone else's faith. If these statements are taught before the child, in his own experience of religion, is ready for them, they may become merely words which one repeats with no understanding or sense of dedication, and so become a hindrance to the experience of pure religion. In guiding children in Christian growth, few persons would begin with a formal statement of faith. They would begin with everyday experiences of religion, then use appropriate statements to give expression to the experiences and strengthen them.

Yet, because children talk about religion and express themselves on theological questions, it is idle to say, "Let us wait until the child is older before trying to explain these important matters to him." Some sort of sharing through words of one's religious thoughts and beliefs is inevitable. When children ask questions about God, one is under obligation to answer honestly and to the best of one's ability. Because one thinks it is the most important matter in the child's education, one must seek to tell the child what one believes.

Though explanation is the method most frequently used in seeking to help children understand the Christian faith, those who use it must remember that it influences the lives of children only to the extent that the explanation really enters into their lives.

### Sharing Ceremonies

A second way in which one may share his religious faith with another is to ask him to participate in the ceremonial expressions and sacraments of faith. In some churches there is an elaborate ritual which dramatizes the faith one professes. To take part in such a ritual may make faith vivid and attractive and meaningful, and may enable one to embrace it as one's own. Other churches have simpler ceremonies, or no ceremony at all, but only periods of group silence and meditation. To participate in such services is often to find amazing illumination upon one's faith.

Adults may invite children to share in such group expressions of faith with confidence that the sincerity and devotion there revealed will be helpful to the child. Services brief in duration, stimulating attention through pageantry, group singing and litanies, or seeking to sooth strains and tensions through serene silences, may prove a very helpful means of sharing one's faith with one's children.

Services planned especially for children, offering participation in sacraments, and using art, music, literature and drama as specific teaching procedures, afford means of sharing faith which may helpfully find a larger place in present-day religious education.

### Expressing One's Faith Through One's Life

There can be no doubt that the most effective means of helping children to an understanding and experience of the Christian faith is to let them live among sincere, friendly Christian persons. The love of God may be made most real to children through living with loving persons. The meaning of salvation may be interpreted to them through living with persons who have themselves accepted the salvation which God offers to men, and who regard salvation as a gift of God, calling for a life of dedication to the actual doing of his will among men.

As we consider sharing the Christian faith with boys and girls, it becomes clear that there must be an understanding of that faith on the part of those who are entrusted with the religious nurture of children. Our failure to teach children is often due to the fact that we are blind guides. Parents and teachers require continual renewal of their own faith through personal and group worship, study and sharing experiences with other Christians.

We cannot have a faith without content. And unless that content is studied and understood and wholeheartedly accepted by the teachers, it is likely to be pale and unimpressive when we attempt to share it with children. What is the content of the Christian faith which we wish to share with boys and girls? There are differences among the churches on many matters. But there is a large measure of agreement upon the essential beliefs.

#### HELPING CHILDREN TO KNOW GOD

Without a satisfying faith in God there can be no fullness of life for children as persons; and only as they learn to live with their fellows as children of God, and so as brothers one of another, is there any ground for hope of world peace or even of the survival of civilization. For men to know and to do the will of God is quite literally the only hope of the world.

Though the importance of the matter makes it necessary that we help children to have a sound theology, it is necessary also to realize that it is possible to try to teach too much, too soon. The very sense of urgency which Christian teachers feel may lead them into attempting to overcome, by much speaking, the natural limitations of the child, and so to overwhelm him with ideas which he is not ready to receive. It must be remembered always that the child responds to God as a child. He is a child and so this is the only way he can respond to God.

How shall we help children to think of God? Because of



limitations of space, three responses will be considered through which a child may come to a sense of the reality of God, and may have fellowship with him. These three responses are not "all about God." But they are suggested as possible beginnings in our teaching of children. They are: response to the Creator God who is very great and upon whom man is utterly dependent, whose laws may be learned and depended upon; response to the loving, wise God, who seeks his children, who provides for them, who plans a good way of life for them, and who welcomes their answering love as a father welcomes the answering love of a child; and response to the righteous God, who has established moral as well as physical laws in this world, and who demands righteousness of his children.

### The Creator God

According to Dr. Gesell, whose studies of child development are thorough-going, there is little evidence to suggest that a child of one or of two years of age has any definite religious sense. The little child does respond with fleeting attitudes of wonder to natural phenomena.

A child of eighteen months loved the moon. One beautiful evening when she was ready for bed, her father took her in his arms and walked out into the moonlit garden. They were both very quiet. Suddenly, the little child turned and hugged her father tightly. She was, apparently, responding to the beauty of the night with wonder and awe. The father said, "Thank you, God, for the moon and the night." But it seems doubtful that there is, at this age, any experience of God, the Creator, which may be separated from general curiosity and wonder about the world which is expanding around the child. It is, therefore, wise to avoid anything like specific religious teaching for these little children lest they become parrots about their religion. Rather, let them enjoy the evidences of the work of the Creator God. Let them associate with persons who know

God and who express their faith in God, not in explanations to the two-year-old, but in attitudes of reverence, in prayer, and in a spirit of dependence upon God, the Creator. Such experiences will prepare the little child for ideas of the creative power of God.

By the time a child is three years old, there is great increase in the ability to use words. But experience remains limited, and it is easy to overdo explanations and interpretations.

The age of four has been called the age of "bursting out of bounds." It is a time of very rapid development. Now come the incessant questions. Why? How? Many of these questions are about God. This child seems almost to be "God intoxicated," as someone once said about Spinoza. He is likely to think that God is responsible for everything that happens, good and bad alike. If the sun shines on the day a picnic is planned, God is "good to" him; if it rains, God is "bad to" him. He prays realistically and expects realistic answers. He believes in God, rather as he believes in Santa Claus, and may, indeed, confuse the two. Both have power to do wonders, to give or to withhold good gifts.

The child at this age is beginning to understand the relationship between the seed and the flower. He can remember planting the seed as he watches the plant develop and the flower blossom. He needs help in distinguishing between the activity of God and the work of man, and in understanding that man may work with God in making beautiful gardens. He needs help in phrasing prayers to avoid disappointments, not instructions in how to pray, but examples of good prayers and suggested phrasings for his prayers.

By the age of six or seven, there may be a fairly well-developed idea of God who created the earth and sky and sea, the animals and man and all beautiful things. Because his own time and space senses are growing, this child is puzzled about how God can be in different places at the

same time, how he can hear prayers from many persons all at once. His questions afford opportunity for the parent and teacher to help him grow not only in understanding the greatness of God, but to begin to develop the concept of God as spirit, the spirit of love, active in his world but also dwelling in the hearts of men.

Because this child's concept of law is yet weak, he is likely to confuse God's activity with magic. He needs help through rich experiences in observing the seasons, in growing food, caring for pets, helping with the baby, to understand that God works through laws; that a child can come to understand these laws and work with God in making his world beautiful and fruitful and good.

By the time a child is eight years old, he seems less occupied with God. Prayer is real, but it is more likely to be limited to certain times and places. The world is pressing in. He thinks more realistically about life and how it came to be. He wants to know in some detail how God made him. He thinks also about death and relates God to it. God makes life and God takes life away. God takes life away either because he thinks this is good, as in the case of old people, or because he punishes someone, as in the case of bad people.

The eight-year-old may learn that death is the result of accident or disaster or disease. He needs help in understanding the operation of law in human life so that he does not attribute all disasters and accidents to the will of God. Great care should be exercised by adults in interpreting the will of God in the case of death and disaster, lest the child come to think of God as imposing an arbitrary and cruel will upon his children. Because at this age a child may understand about making choices, he can be taught that much of the misery in the world is caused, not by God's will, but by man's will. Because God gave man the privilege of choosing, he may refuse to live the good way God planned

for man to live. And when he does so choose, he brings unhappiness to others.

It seems often that nine and ten years of age marks an age of skepticism. The boy or girl of this age, if properly taught, may have a fairly satisfactory idea of God, but he may not be much concerned with God. He asks fewer questions than the five-year-old, but he thinks more questions. The pressure of the physical world about him, the many activities and things to do, occupy his time. Yet it is very important that the child of this age be given careful and meaningful teaching about God, the Creator. He needs help in relating science to God. God as Creator means that God is the source of life, order, all creation. God's laws are discovered by science; God's purposes for his creation are the insights of religious faith, and this insight is attained through prayer and fellowship with God and his older children.

At this age, too, the child is conscious of his own power. He needs to be confronted with God's power, majesty, greatness, through nature, history, science, until he comes to say with his whole being, "O God, our God, thou art very great!"

### **The Loving God**

The little child's thought of the love of God, just as his thought of the love of his parents, probably begins with the awareness of provision for his own needs. God is the provider. The little child's response to the love of God is to be glad about good gifts. He comes to want to please God, the provider, as he wants to please his parents.

The experience of love as companionship seems to begin in infancy as the baby responds with coos and laughs and wiggles of pleasure when his mother comes near him and speaks to him. But consciousness of companionship probably comes between three and four years of age, and is a very real factor in the life of the child by the time he is



five. These children find pleasure in helping their parents. They can begin to understand the thought of working with God who loves them through planting seeds, watering flowers, caring for pets, and helping other people.

At about seven comes the ability to understand that love sometimes means denial as well as fulfillment. This can be interpreted most readily through reference to the experience of younger children. A child of seven can know that younger children must be denied some things they want, such as matches or sharp knives. These little children know not what they ask, and so must be protected from things which will hurt them. Through developing the sense of fellowship with God, of companionship in working with God, the older child can come to feel a love for God and a confidence in God that will survive denial, disaster and suffering.

It is important also that the older child's understanding of the love of God in relation to the laws of God be increased. Falling objects may hit and often hurt a person standing under them. This does not mean that God does not love the person. It is necessary, if man is to be able to make any plans, that the laws of the physical world be dependable. It would not increase, but rather make impossible, any real human happiness, if God set aside the laws of the physical universe whenever a child was in danger of being hurt. But God's love is also dependable. The child who suffers need not feel forgotten, for the love of God is all about him. As he grows he is helped to understand more and more about the laws that govern the world and how to use them wisely to avoid danger and to increase happiness.

### The Righteous God

As the child's understanding of the laws of the physical world grows, his understanding of the moral law may grow also. Children can be taught that the moral law, though not so easily observed, is just as real. The conse-

quences of disregarding it, though they may not always be seen immediately, are just as inevitable. Children may be taught that God's purposes for men are righteous altogether. Though there is yet ignorance among the wisest men about the complete will of God, God is helping men to grow in understanding. When man breaks God's moral law, God's love offers forgiveness and seeks to help the person bear what comes. But God does not set aside the moral law to save the person from the consequences of disregarding it, any more than he sets aside the laws of the physical universe to protect a child from an accident.

It is very important that older children come to know that "Woe unto him who calls evil good, and good evil" is not an arbitrary pronouncement of an angry God, but a sober statement of fact. God's love and his righteousness are each essential to the other. And the righteousness of God demands righteousness of his children.

### HELPING CHILDREN TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST

In helping children to know Jesus it is first of all important that they know the record of his life. Sometimes we appear to expect children to know about Jesus by some supernatural process, when it is our responsibility to see to it that they are given the opportunity to know him through intelligent teaching.

### Jesus, as He Lived Among Men

Little children as young as three years love brief, simple stories of Jesus, the baby, and Jesus, the friendly helper who loved children. As they grow older stories of the courage and strength of Jesus may have a place. The physical strength that made possible long journeys on foot over rough terrain, and fearlessness in the presence of personal danger, have a strong appeal. Above all this, however, stands his goodness, and this must always be made evident.

Jesus was good; but he was more than one among other

good men. He was unique among men. Often, in our desire to make apparent this uniqueness, we emphasize it with halos on our pictures, and with stress upon miracles. Now, halos may be used if one desires them, and present-day boys and girls rarely seem seriously disturbed by miracles if they are recounted simply. But when one attempts to use miracles as proof that Jesus was unique he runs into grave difficulty. Jesus did wonderful deeds, yes. But he did not "work a miracle" to impress the multitudes with his uniqueness. In fact, he plainly denounced this procedure. People were hungry, and he ministered to their needs. People were sick and he helped them to be well. People were lonely and he gave them companionship and a new sense of their own worth. What he did he did for the purpose of helping people, not to impress them by wonder-working.

Just how he did what he did we are not told, and it is unimportant. If one stresses the purpose of Jesus and says frankly that we do not know just what he did in order to make effective the help he afforded, boys and girls rarely will push for more detailed explanation of the how. When they do raise such questions, these questions must, of course, be answered in light of the best knowledge and insight of the teacher.

We shall not have to depend upon "proof from miracles" if we help boys and girls to know the sort of person Jesus was; if we help them discover his standard of values, his attitude toward persons, the things he considered important, how he changed persons, how he won them to be his followers, to accept his way of life with no promise of reward, but rather with a challenge to take up a cross. Years after his earthly life was ended, men all over the world have been prepared to die for him. By dwelling on these things, the uniqueness of Jesus will become evident to children.

We will, then, help our children and growing boys and girls to know Jesus; to know him as a friendly, courageous,

good person, a great example, an inspiring, unique leader; to know his life and teachings in detail.

### Jesus as Savior

But Jesus is yet more than this. He is Savior. Older children may come to know that in Jesus, God is drawing near to men to forgive them, to offer present help in overcoming tendencies to sin, to help them to be good, to lead men to recognize their possibilities as children of God, to give them courage to do the will of God, to cooperate in his good purposes.

As the child seeks to do the will of God, he realizes that often it is difficult to know what is right and what is wrong. And almost always, he is aware of the difficulty of choosing the right when it goes against what he wants to do. He then needs to know that God helps him by sending Jesus to show him what is good, and also to show him how God loves him, seeks him, helps him, forgives him, saves him.

What shall we teach of the crucifixion? Crucifixion is a stark reality of life. Boys and girls know that when they stand against the accepted ways of their group, even though they are right, they suffer for it. They know it costs something to be good in a society which is not good. And so they can understand that when Jesus did the will of God utterly, and called upon men to do the will of God, he was not going to have an easy life. When he judged the way of life, the traditions and the doctrines of the important ones among his people, and found them contrary to the will of God, he made these men furious. They turned upon him. He could have saved himself by compromise, but he would not compromise. And so he died. He died because of man's sin in denying the will of God.

There is much more to be taught about the life and death of Jesus Christ as children mature. But while they are yet children, boys and girls may come to know Jesus as friend, example, helper, Savior. What Jesus is to each



individual must be expressed in terms of each person's life. So the painting for one's self of the portrait of Jesus is a part of Christian growth.

### INTERPRETING THE HOLY SPIRIT

In our program of the religious education of children, we have not emphasized the Holy Spirit, largely, of course, because it is difficult to do so without arousing children's fears and creating misconceptions. Yet we may approach the matter in constructive manner.

At about six or seven years of age, children move from a belief in a "real Santa Claus" to an understanding of the spirit of Christmas. At about this same age, we may expect also some understanding of God beyond the crude, materialistic ideas of earlier childhood.

We must be careful not to expect too much. But there is something stirring in the child's consciousness upon which we may depend to give meaning to the expression, "the spirit of God." And so we may speak of the spirit of God in our lives, knowing that there will not be full comprehension, but expecting some response.

By ten or eleven, there will be growing understanding of the work of God in men's lives. We do good because God is in our lives. We overcome selfish impulses because God is with us.

These boys and girls are hearing about the spirit of Washington, the spirit of Lincoln, the spirit of Lee, the spirit of America. They have some understanding of what these words mean, and how the spirits of great men and of great social organizations influence men's lives. And so they can have some understanding of the meaning of the spirit of God working in the lives of men.

We may, then, teach a growing child that God is the Creator, Almighty, above, beyond and utterly other than men; and God is in Jesus Christ, drawing near to men, making manifest his love and will to them and saving them

from their sin; and God is Holy Spirit, entering into men's lives and leading them to respond to his love and to do his will.

### HELPING CHILDREN TO LOVE THEIR FELLOWMEN

That men who commit their ways unto the Lord become good men is one of the great affirmations of the Christian faith. A man who claims to be a Christian and who continues to be unkind and mean and self-centered is suspected of hypocrisy.

We may help children to make a beginning, while they are yet little children, in leading the Christian life. But a Christian life on their level is not apart from helping them to know the purposes of God as revealed in Jesus Christ; or apart from their own normal growth in wisdom and in stature and in understanding.

We have seen that children are born with certain possibilities of growing both physically and mentally. It is an affirmation of the Christian faith that they are born also with certain spiritual possibilities. What determines for each individual the direction and the extent of the development of these possibilities? Why does one infant become a saint and another become a sinner?

To a certain extent, some matters are determined before the child is born. Children are born with tendencies to do their own rather than God's will. Children with certain mental and physical defects at birth are, for that reason, not likely to develop into whole persons. And there are, in the environment of many children, conditions of poverty, cruelty, fear, which present tremendous obstacles. The child who is born deficient cannot be classified as either saint or sinner whatever he does. But taking account of the stumbling blocks in the way of many children caused by the bad conditions surrounding them, there is a large measure of opportunity for most human beings, with the help of God, to choose the way their souls shall go.

## Learning to Know Right and Wrong

The growth in understanding right and wrong is a slow process, dependent upon growing ability to think, to reason, to make comparisons, to foresee consequences. There seems to be a direct relationship between the development of the child's awareness of other personalities and the development of his awareness of right and wrong.

The infant smiles at about six weeks, a sort of egocentric smile, if we please. At about eight weeks, he seems to smile in response to his mother's smile. A few months later, he has learned to distinguish between smiles of approval and smiles of disapproval; to "no, no," and "good baby." Then, apparently suddenly at about fifteen months, he refuses to respond. He "asserts himself," as we say.

At about eighteen months, the little child may withdraw, may have "guilty" reactions, may seek alibis when he disobeys. Is this evidence that he now knows right from wrong and is accountable for his deeds? Definitely not. The ability to distinguish between right and wrong must develop along with his whole self. It is dependent upon his ability to know cause and effect, to generalize from particulars, and to apply the generalization to a new situation. Little children do not have these abilities. In other words, little children are neither good nor bad in any ethical sense. They are almost completely self-centered.

Between two and three years of age, children usually know that certain ways of behaving are considered good by their adults and certain ways of behaving are considered bad. But they cannot evaluate the standards of their adults. If the adults approve showing off, this little child may feel that he is being "good" when he sings a song in a public place, and that he is being "bad" when he prefers to be quiet. If the adults disapprove showing off, he may feel that he is being "bad" when he sings in a public place and "good" when he is quiet. It is very important that the adults

give thoughtful attention to what they praise, and that they be consistent about it.

If the child is reared among understanding adults, by the time he is five years old he will be able to make some generalizations when the situations are similar. By six or seven, the child begins to have some general notion of right and wrong, in accordance with the standards of his adults. Within these limits, he applies the standards to himself and to others. He knows now that rightness and wrongness are different, and that he must choose between them many times each day.

By nine or ten years of age the child may be expected to be a responsible citizen of his own home, neighborhood, and school, knowing and accepting the rules and laws, criticizing his own and others' conduct and attitude on a reasonably fair basis.

## Sin

At what point in the child's development, then, may we apply the concept of sin? If along with the growth of his sense of right and wrong there has been the opportunity to develop also the sense of the reality, love, wisdom, and righteousness of God, the child may be expected to relate goodness and rightness to the will of God, and badness and wrongness to denial of the will of God. This simple concept of sin, as refusing to do the will of God as one understands it, can have meaning at about eight years of age and can be an important concept by ten or eleven.

There is a caution which all adults who are concerned with the religious education of children must observe. It is often the sensitive, insecure children who are most responsive to the idea of responsibility for wrongness and badness. The hearty, active, robust, well-adjusted child will be far less responsive. Consequently, the greatest care should be taken not to lay upon sensitive children a burden of guilt too heavy for them to bear. This caution is important.



There are many sick adult personalities whose problems come from "too much" and "too early" in the way of a sense of guilt.

There is another caution which must be regarded. Limitations due to lack of experience and to lack of maturity are not sins. They cause adults inconvenience, and so often are called "bad" to the moral confusion of the child. There is nothing bad about playing in good, clean, made-from-fresh-rain-water mud. But if Mother is embarrassed before company by a muddy son or daughter, she may act as if it were really bad. Accidents caused by failure to judge distances correctly or to realize how easily a fragile vase may lose its balance are not "bad." Even taking what belongs to someone else or telling a lie may be the child's crude way of defending himself from insecurity or fear, rather than badness. He needs confidence in himself and in the love of his adults, rather than a heavier load of responsibility and guilt.

With these precautions in mind, we may do well to cease shying away from the word "sin" in our teaching of older boys and girls. It is a word which cannot be made pretty and which does not lend itself to humor or flippancy. "Naughtiness" does so lend itself, and "uncooperative," another word popular as a substitute, is too long and too derived a word to be a very strong word. "Sin" is short, easy to say, solemn, forceful. To use it cautiously, but firmly, in discussing deliberate violation of those laws of God which the child may reasonably be expected to know, seems to be a definite need in the present-day religious education of older children.

### Salvation

But sin must not be left without relief. Children know that it is easy to do the things that they should not do, and to leave undone the things that they should do. They know it is not easy to overcome the drives to

put their own good above their neighbor's good. They know also that failure to overcome these drives which are natural to them results in unhappiness for both themselves and others, whether it be in the family living room, on the village school ground, or at the international conference table.

They can, therefore, come to know the need for salvation from sin. Now, salvation is a word which is rarely used in the religious education of children. We have been afraid of it, because it has been confused so often with the extravagances and exploitation of children in so-called "revival meetings" of the spectacular type. But it is a word which should have a place. It is a positive word, a rich word. It means the overcoming of evil, the way to wholeness of life, to living life to the full. To know that man is prone to do evil, but that God offers him salvation is the comforting, courage-inspiring sort of knowledge which we should not fail to make available to older children.

As a lecturer said recently, one cannot expect a natural man to act unnaturally; that is, contrary to the self-seeking urges in his original nature. A natural child will seek his own at the expense of another's good. He will think of himself more highly than he ought to think. This should not alarm us. But while accepting him as he is, we may seek also to lead him to know himself as more than a natural child. We may seek to lead him to know himself also as a spiritual child. Then he may be able to act like a child of God, one who has overcome natural self-centeredness because he responded to God drawing near in Christ Jesus to offer salvation to men.

### CHAPTER III

## *Learning Through Fellowship—in the Family*

A LITTLE CHILD OF WHOM MISS HETTY LEE TELLS, HUGGED his mother after a happy day and asked, "Is God as nice as you, Mummy?" As startling as such a question may be to a parent, it seems to be true that a little child does learn about God from his parents, primarily not through what they tell him but through what they show him. There seems to be increasing evidence that whatever we wish to teach children about religion and human relationship can best be taught through fellowship. Though other teaching methods may supplement, no other methods can take the place of being a part of a human fellowship in which little children see Christian attitudes toward God and toward one's fellows expressed in day-by-day deeds as well as in words.

### THE HOME AND THE LITTLE CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

If a child is reared in a home where love and mutual trust and confidence are shown in the relationships of the adults, and where he is loved and wanted and accepted as he is, he has the greatest help that human beings can afford him in coming to know the love of God. Under these conditions he unconsciously responds to God with answering love and confidence and obedience.

To tell a little child that God loves him becomes meaningful when he has experienced love. And he is likely to attribute to God the sort of love he has received in his family. If his parents express their love for him by "spoiling" him, he is likely to come to feel that God's love will be expressed through giving him everything for which he asks.

If his parents express their love for him by making too heavy demands upon him in the way of "being good," or threaten him with "Mother won't love you if you do that," he will be likely to feel that God's love, too, will be dependent upon his own conduct. In either case, the child is likely to have a distorted idea of God and to suffer accordingly.

If, in his family, the little child comes to know that the love of his parents is always around him, whether he is good or bad, whether he is happy or unhappy, whether he is well or sick, comforting, supporting, encouraging him, then he can come to sense the meaning of the everlasting love of God.

If a child's parents are dependable, he will come more readily to understand the dependability of God. If, on the other hand, he lives with parents who punish him today for the same type of conduct at which they laughed yesterday, he is thrown into confusion.

A little boy of two was playing in a corner by his daddy's tobacco cabinet while his parents were entertaining adult guests. Suddenly, the child appeared in the center of the room, clutching a handful of large cigars. He was a comical sight to the guests, and was greeted with shouts of laughter. Daddy, feeling that his young son had been very "cute" smilingly removed the cigars and closed the door of the cabinet. His "No, no," carried no conviction.

The child was given a toy, and the adults returned to their conversation. But the little boy found the toy entirely unsatisfactory as a substitute for the delightful attention he had received when he appeared with the contents of his daddy's tobacco cabinet. And so he repeated the performance, not once but several times. Finally, it ceased to be amusing to the adults and became annoying. And now, Daddy, instead of bestowing approval, administered a spank. Yet what had changed in the situation was not the child's conduct but the adults' feeling about it.



If the child is to be taught not to do something, he should find disapproval each time he does it, including the first time. If, on the other hand, his adults deal with his conduct on the basis of their own feelings and convenience, the child is likely to be in constant uncertainty, expressing himself in all sorts of unpleasant ways which we call "nervousness." And he is likely to attribute to God the capriciousness he has found in his parents.

God is not bound by chains of human forging. Out of some unloving and undependable families have come persons who have noble ideas of God and Christian attitudes toward God. But it does seem to be true, beyond any reasonable question, that whether we like it or not, the experiences and associations within the family create the child's basic ideas of the nature of the universe and even of the character of God himself.

#### THE HOME AND THE CHILD'S RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Loving God with all one's mind and heart and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself, does not come easily to human beings. Children need inspiration, example, practice, and instruction. But the greatest of these is example. A family in which the members really do prefer one another, give the happiness and welfare of others equal place alongside one's own, bear one another's burdens, and share one another's joys, gives a child the opportunity to see in action the law of love in human relationships.

"I am going to make a boat," Robert, aged three, said to his mother.

"Fine," said Mother. "Can I help you?"

So Robert and Mother planned together and Robert went happily to work in the yard on an egg crate which was to be, for him, a boat.

Now, Mother might have said, "Rubbish! You can't make a boat." Or she might have said, "Well, go on and make it but don't bother me." Either response would have re-

lieved the mother of the necessity of taking time out of a busy day to live with her child. But both answers would have denied to that child an opportunity to grow. Instead, she treated the little boy like a real person, one whose ideas were worth considering, one with whom it was pleasure to work out plans. She was thus showing him respect, and so teaching him that persons are important.

If Mother and Father treat one another with consideration, they are teaching their children to show consideration for others; if they are thoughtful of those who serve the home, they are teaching their children thoughtfulness; if they are careful to show regard for the comfort of their neighbors by avoiding unnecessary noise, keeping dogs from running on gardens, and remembering to sweep the sidewalk, they are teaching their children to have regard for their neighbors.

Daddy came home from work and found Mother late with her preparations for dinner, worn out with a fretful baby and a vigorous four-year-old son. Now, the man might have felt that after a hard day at the office, he deserved peace and quiet and a good dinner ready for him when he came home. And he would have been right! He did "deserve" these comforts. But instead of insisting upon his rights, he responded to the mother's situation, and tried to help. He gave the hungry little boy his supper while the mother bathed and quieted the baby and put her to bed. Then he told stories to the little boy while the mother prepared dinner. The result was a peaceful household, where the evidences of loving generosity overcame the temporary confusion and the mother's feeling of being overwhelmed. The four-year-old did not analyze the situation. He could not have told anyone what he had learned from it. But he was learning. He was learning that the way of love in human relationships, while it makes demands upon persons, also contributes immeasurably to their happiness and to the happiness of others.

## SOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE FAMILY

But in every normal family there will be conflict. In fact, one of the most successful counselors in family living says that the family life is more wholesome when there are some conflicts than when all is sweetness and light! Her point is that conflicts are inevitable in all human relations, and that through helping persons to solve conflicts within the bonds of mutual respect and love, the family is meeting a pressing need.

Mary, aged ten, had agreed to make some fudge for the school bazaar the next day. She and the friend who was to help her arrived home to find brother Tim, aged eight, and a friend of his already in possession of the kitchen, where they were doing a chemistry experiment in the sink. Here were conditions similar to those which cause most of the conflicts in the world—two groups wanting the same thing at the same time. Mother was called upon.

First of all, she asked for the facts. Did either Mary or Tim have any priority in the kitchen? Yes, Mary had told the family at dinner the evening before that she had been asked to make fudge, and permission had been given for her to make it after school today. Suddenly Tim had decided that he wanted to work with his chemistry set, and had asked Mother if he might use the sink for one part of an experiment which needed running water. Mother had given permission. The kitchen was too small for both activities at once. So much for the facts.

In the light of the facts, what was the best solution? Mother explained to Tim and his friend that she had not realized their experiment would take more than a few minutes. She had previously given Mary permission to use the kitchen for her fudge. Under the conditions, what could Tim and John do to help out?

Though they had started out by being absolutely sure that they had full right to stay in the kitchen, the boys

began to see that there was another side to the matter. Mary had to work in the kitchen, as that was the only place where there was a stove, while they could work by the spigot in the back yard since they needed only running water. Moreover, being asked to help solve the difficulty, Tim felt that he was a responsible member of the family group, and so was willing to cooperate in the interest of family peace and harmony.

### THE HOME AND THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

From his parents the child learns, also, his attitudes toward persons whose skin, or facial contours, or manner of speech, or way of dressing is different from his own. If, in his own home, the little child hears sneering remarks about Jews or Negroes or foreigners; if jokes are made at the expense of those who are different; if careless generalizations are made about New Englanders being close or Southerners being lazy or Mexicans being dirty or Japanese being untrustworthy—a child living in such a family absorbs prejudices into his thinking, and so is handicapped. If, on the other hand, persons who are different are treated on their merits as persons, children begin to learn that differences may be accepted with mutual respect and friendliness.

In one family, the only Jews the children knew were two merchants in their neighborhood who did not have a very savory reputation for generous dealing. The parents had tried to overcome prejudice against them by making all the correct statements and shush-shushing all the unfriendly comments, but the fact of the matter was that these merchants were not very honorable persons. The problem of friendly attitudes toward Jews could not be solved within that one setting. The parents sought out and found some other Jews, delightful, interesting, friendly persons to whom they could introduce their children with pleasure and sincerity, as persons whom it was good to

know. And the children learned that not all Jews are disagreeable merchants, and that Jews, like every other group, have among them some persons who are pleasant, some unpleasant, some who are grasping, some who are generous.

The fact that all groups within our population have some good and some bad samples of the human race among them, is one of the most helpful facts in overcoming prejudices fed by the careless generalizations about groups different from one's own. The family that wishes to help its children to have a sound foundation for respecting persons as persons, while accepting differences, will provide opportunities for the children to meet under favorable conditions as many good persons as possible from many different racial and national backgrounds.

#### THE CHILD'S OWN CHARACTER AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES

So much has been said and written in recent years about juvenile delinquency that parents and teachers alike are somewhat on the defensive. Yet the fact must be faced that the number of children who are in conflict with the society in which they live is increasing. Children from so-called "good homes" (meaning homes where there is good shelter, good food, enough money to care for all the needs that arise, and parents who have a certain position in the neighborhood) are stealing, breaking windows, destroying public property and the neighbors' gardens, and, all too often, engaging in even more offensive activities. It has become clear that while poverty, filth, bad health conditions, overcrowding and financial insecurity are full of danger for children, and cause them to become serious community problems, there are also other causes of delinquency.

It is not only the home where there is not enough money that gives the child feelings of insecurity. He may have "everything" and yet not have what he needs most—the feeling of being wanted, of being accepted and loved just as he is, with all his limitations.



It often happens that in the very eagerness to give their child every opportunity, and in their ambitions for him, parents push him beyond his ability, and so cause his unhappiness. In a recent study, it was found that the feeling of being pushed beyond their abilities in school work or music or social development was one of the most serious causes of trouble in school children. When a job looks too big the child is discouraged before he begins. He is afraid to try it. And so he is full of tensions and strain and his learning is blocked.

In the cases of the children studied too much pressure caused the lack of a sense of responsibility, an inclination to bully younger children, the need of constant prodding to do their normal school work. Because such a child feels that he is failing to measure up to his parents' high expectations for him, he is on the defensive, he is upset, and so becomes a problem child without himself understanding what makes him do what he does.

Yet the family must have standards for the child. He must not be allowed to feel that "any old way" is good enough. Here again, fellowship seems to offer the key. If parents and children share in the housework, in the care of the yard and the gardens, of pets and younger children, the children may be given the help they need when the job proves too difficult. By this method they may learn good habits of work from their adults. If a little girl is helping her mother with the house cleaning, the mother can teach her to dust carefully by working alongside her and making interesting comments upon the difference in the appearance of a well-dusted table and one which has islands of dust remaining. If a boy is helping his father cut the grass or weed the garden, the experience of sharing a job makes the boy feel important, and he is in a good mood to learn from his father good ways of clipping the grass. At the same time, such children are learning to assume responsibility for their home, and are learning that they are considered important

members of the family. They are not under pressure to do more than they can do, but are given the opportunity to do all they can do in the best manner they can. Success makes them desire to help in other tasks.

While feeling pushed beyond his abilities actually retards a child's learning, being babied is almost equally a handicap to the child in becoming a well-rounded person. If he is never faced with jobs which require him to use all his capacities and even stretch them a little, he will be "soft" and fail to develop stamina. Such a child has difficulty making the normal adjustments required of children who play together. He wishes always to be the center of attention, and so is unpopular with the other children. Being left out of group activities he takes all sorts of unpleasant means to secure attention, such as "showing off," "bullying," refusing to do what the other children choose, pretending to be sick.

The Yale Institute of Human Relations has made a thorough-going study, over many years, of aggressive behavior—that unpleasant sort of behavior which seeks always first place for one's self, demands the center of the stage at all times, fights on the slightest provocation. The results have been announced. The study has come to the conclusion that all aggressive behavior comes from feelings of frustration. There is every reason to trust this study. Think what it would mean to the peace of the world if the homes of the nations could help their little children and boys and girls to feel secure in family affection and appreciation, and secure in the love and care of God! Aggressive behavior could then be attacked at its roots. There could be no aggressive nation if there were no aggressive persons, and world peace would be abiding.

#### HOME AND CHURCH WORKING TOGETHER

The demands which are made upon parents are the most exacting of all demands made upon human beings.

To be always calm, always understanding, always wise, always patient, always kind, always able to appreciate the child as he is, while wishing with all one's heart that he were brighter or more skillful or more loving requires all that the human being can develop of whole-hearted and selfless devotion. In fact, it requires more than a human being can offer. Only one who has the support of other persons who share his purposes and who constantly renew his strength through fellowship in prayer and the worship of God, can measure up to the demands which family relationships lay upon parents. And so Christian parents will look to the church. They will find there like-minded persons who will encourage them and share experiences with them, and give them the refreshment of spirit which comes from Christian fellowship.

Christian parents will also relate their children to the church. They will consider with the children's leaders of the church the plans for children of each age group, both making and receiving suggestions in the interest of the child. The time has long since passed when the church school plans a program for children and asks the parents to cooperate by doing just what the church school suggests. Parents are now invited to take part in the basic planning, and it is the purpose to build a program which will include both the home and the church, both the parents and the church leaders. Some activities that are helpful in Christian growth can best be carried out in the family, and some can best be carried out in the church. But through conference, parents and teachers can plan most helpfully for a complete program of Christian nurture for the child, including what is done in the church group and what is done in the home group. Parents and church leaders will also consider together the community groups in which the children participate, and ways of bringing the purposes of Christian education to bear upon the programs and activities of all these groups

## FAMILY FELLOWSHIP IN WORSHIP

In almost any group of church parents the discussion of family worship brings up all the difficulties facing the present-day family in carrying out the purpose of having a time and a place set aside for family worship.

It is true that there are problems to be solved. Father has to make the 7:48 train or be late to work; Junior has to get up to catch the high school bus at eight o'clock; Mary has to meet the other girls at the corner by 8:10; Tommie has to be ready to be picked up for kindergarten at 8:15; and the baby is demanding attention at just this time. So the morning does not seem to be a good time for quiet meditation.

During the day the members of the family are separated. In the evening, the younger children have to get to bed early, the older children have pressing jobs of home work to do, Daddy has brought work home from the office, and Mother is pretty well worn out.

Yes, the present-day family has a difficult time finding an opportunity for family worship. The first question to be settled, therefore, is this: "How important is it?" It is of first importance that children and their parents take God into account in their living and planning. The time and place and manner of family worship will vary, according to the conditions under which the members of the family live and work. But some plan for acknowledging God and seeking his companionship and guidance in the affairs of life is essential to the child's Christian growth.

Perhaps in the morning there is opportunity for no more than a brief prayer at breakfast. But this prayer is important enough to call for whatever adjustment is necessary to have all the family together for two or three minutes. In most families on most mornings, it would calm the atmosphere of hurry and tension if, for one moment, everybody turned to God. "Thank you, God, for this day. There

are hard things to be done today. (Mention very briefly any special responsibilities of any members of the family: examinations, office problems, school citizenship assignments.) We want to do them well. Help us to remember that you will be with us. There are people to be lived with today. (Mention any special problems in human relationship which are to be faced: match games to be played, neighborhood problems or pleasures, office relationships.) Help us to know what we should do to make things go happily and to be good members of our groups. Thank you, God, for loving us and helping us."

Any family, which sincerely wishes to do so, can find time enough for such a brief turning to God in the morning. And it may make all the difference between a day of useful work and happy living, and a day of snarls and friction, stalemates and frustrations.

But there must be more than this if the children are to be taught to know God and to be responsive to his will. They must have the opportunity to talk over with parents questions which come to them about the nature of God and how he helps persons, about prayer and why one does not always get what one prays for, about sickness, suffering, death and disaster, and how these things can be if God loves his children.

Such conversations will, probably, not come at set times. They will be most helpful if they come at the time when the child feels the need for them. This means that the parents will have to be responsive to the mood of the child, will understand when problems are troubling him, and set aside other matters to provide a sense of leisure so the child may feel free to talk.

A mother had planned a full evening of work on a paper for her club. She plunged into it immediately after dinner. She was vaguely aware of the fact that her twelve-year-old son was restless as he did his home work, but she was engrossed in her own preparation and paid little attention.



She was looking into space, her attention riveted on a particular point in connection with her paper, when the boy came up behind her chair. Her first impulse was one of impatience. But a second glance showed her that the boy needed her. She gave a slight yawn and closed the book. "I think I need a breathing spell before I do any more work, Bob. Let's go for a little walk."

The boy responded eagerly, and they walked quietly for a little way. Then Bob began his shy questions. The father of one of the boys in his room had been arrested for stealing. He had confessed. His son was crushed. How could Bob help him? And the club paper was forgotten as the mother faced with her son the difficult problem he had raised.

Now, mothers do need to have time for their club papers, and for other personal matters! They cannot give all their time to their children and continue to be, themselves, interesting and well-adjusted persons. But when real opportunity arises in the family for helping children clarify their thoughts about bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the love of Christ, the Christian parent will recognize it as an opportunity which merits priority in his schedule.

Many times in the on-going life of the family there will come occasions which lend themselves to meaningful religious teaching and experiences of worship. Trips to the woods to see the autumn coloring, to a farm to buy eggs or vegetables, to the lake for a dip in the cool water, planting seeds and caring for pets, having fun together in games or reading or making things, laughing together over an amusing experience, working together to make the house more attractive—any of these everyday experiences may be lifted up and made an opportunity for informal worship.

In the Christian family there will also be some occasions when the family as a family will wish to pray together, read the Bible, and sing hymns in an unhurried time of planned family worship. The age of the children will be taken into account in selecting the material that will be used. It need

not be limited exclusively to material that the youngest member will fully understand. In a family setting little children sense meanings which they do not fully comprehend.

Help for parents in planning family worship are available in the church school periodicals for the age groups, and for parents and from sources suggested in the Appendix, pages 147-160. But these materials should be regarded only as helps. They suggest to the parents some ways of going about planning occasions of worship for their own family. The plan which will be most meaningful for any family is the plan that family works out for itself.

Out of the brief family prayers in the morning, informal moments of worship, the conversations about puzzling questions concerning the relation of God to human need, and planned occasions of family fellowship, will come to the child that sense of security in the universe which is essential to his growth and development into a useful, wholesome person. And out of such experiences come, too, the desire and purpose to be worthy children of God, children upon whom he can depend to do his work in the world. Family worship will not end in itself. It will be creative. It will lead the child out of himself and his own family into the world wherever there is human need. It will be brought to its fullness in deeds of love and mercy.

## CHAPTER IV

# *Learning Through Fellowship—in the Church*

FOR MANY A LITTLE CHILD THE CHURCH IS THE FIRST INSTITUTION outside the home with which he is related. If the church were no more than one human institution among many others, because it is so often the first institution with which the little child has contact, it would be of the greatest importance that he have there happy experiences with other persons. But the church is more than one social institution among many. The church is unique. The church is of God. The church is the body of Christ through which he is living and working in the world today. And the church is the fellowship of Christians. Into this fellowship little children may be welcomed, and through this fellowship they may learn the way of salvation for themselves and for the world.

### FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHILDREN'S GROUPS

In the children's groups in every church it is important that good methods and good materials be used. But at least equally important is the fellowship within the group. If the teachers are friendly and cooperative with one another, this friendly spirit is teaching the children. If the children enjoy being there and feel at home, as they are wanted, and loved, these feelings are part of their learning.

Lawrence had come to the kindergarten of his parents' church for the first time. He was shy and timid, but interested in what was going on. One of the helpers greeted him, and invited him to sit by her a little apart from the group. She did not confuse him with a great deal of talk and

explanation. She did not urge him to join the group. They just sat together quietly watching the children. After a while she said, "The lady over there by the piano is Miss Rogers." By and by she added, "The children are going to listen to a story now. Miss Rogers is going to tell it. Would you like to go nearer where you can hear?" The little boy nodded, and the helper went with him to a chair on the edge of the group of children. Miss Rogers did not call attention to the "new child," as this would have embarrassed him. She gave him a friendly smile and began telling the story. After it was finished, the children talked for a few minutes about various things that interested them. Then Miss Rogers said, without any undue emphasis, "We like to have children come to our church who have never come before. Lawrence has not come before. Bobby, will you show him where the water bubbler is?" Then she sought promptly to interest the other children in activities away from the bubbler. The helper quickly made way for Bobby, and the two little boys went to the bubbler. When they came back to the group together, Lawrence began to feel that he "belonged."

Among the teachers of the children's departments of one large church there was a fine spirit of cooperation. They felt that it was important for the children to know one another and to plan together for happy times for themselves, for other members of their church family, and for those outside their church. They knew that teaching about brotherhood could be dead and fruitless unless there was a real experience of brotherhood among those who were studying it.

The juniors worked three Saturdays to make a play house for the kindergarten. The primary boys and girls sand-papered to smoothness some large, light blocks a carpenter in the church had made for the nursery. The kindergarten children, who had two beautiful pictures given them, planned a surprise for the primary department and pre-

sented one of the pictures. The junior high school girls made several pretty flower baskets for the kindergarten children to fill each week with flowers and send to a little girl who had a badly broken leg which kept her in the hospital for two months. The juniors and the primary boys and girls jointly planned a birthday party for the sexton. And all together, the children planned and carried out a book shower for another church which was starting a children's library in a town where there was no public library.

In this church, each department has good equipment and adequate supplies. But two or three departments sometimes need a piece of equipment which is provided only for one department in the church. There is cheerful sharing among teachers and children and careful attention given to returning borrowed articles in good condition.

#### GROUPING IN THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENTS

Important in promoting fellowship among the children in any church is the grouping of those who come. If the children are to be happy, thoughtful attention must be given to the question of which children may wisely be put together for work, study, and worship.

How shall the children be grouped according to age? How many children shall be in each group? Shall the children remain in established groups throughout the entire session, or shall they meet with other groups for part of the session? Shall the boys and girls be separated?

The fact of the matter is that there can be no hard and fast rule about grouping which will be useful in every local church. There are, however, some principles which are likely to be useful in working out the grouping in any given church. From the practical point of view, a primary consideration in grouping is the number of children to be taught. If there are many children there will, of course, be a number of groups for children. If there are few children, it is not practicable to have many groups, and so a



wider age range will be taught together. Let us suppose that there are one hundred children from birth through eleven years of age in a given church.

### **The Little Children**

For the babies, too young to come to the church, a visitor to the home will be provided who will take helpful leaflets to the mother, lend her books if she needs them, encourage participation in parents' groups in the church, explain the plan for the dedication or baptism of babies, and keep the pastor in touch with the family. She will remember the baby's birthday, and, when he reaches the age at which he may happily come to the church school, she will plan with the parents for his first coming.

Since the visiting of families requires individual work with each child, only eight or ten children should be assigned to each worker. In a small church with a compact membership where transportation is no problem, the home visitor may be able also to serve as the leader of the nursery class, to which the little children come when they are about three years of age. There will probably be less than ten of these children in a small church, and the average attendance for this youngest group is likely to be irregular. If the leader has between five and eight of these little children with her on Sunday, she can probably get along with one assistant. If there are more than ten children, there should be more assistants so that there may be small groups in different parts of the room.

If the church is limited in its ability to provide rooms, priority should be given to the youngest children. Little children of the nursery class should have a room as nearly soundproof as possible, and enough floor space to provide not less than eighteen, and preferably twenty-five, square feet per child.

In a church which has one hundred children, the kindergarten children, of four or five, will likely provide just

about the right proportion of children for a happy kindergarten grouping. For children of this age, it is very unwise to have a large group in one room. They get in one another's way, and become confused and irritated. Fifteen children in the kindergarten, with a leader and an assistant, can have a delightful time. With more than twenty-five children, an additional assistant is needed.

If the children do not "divide equally" among the various age groups, there will, of course, have to be intelligent planning to make wise combinations for the most helpful use of the rooms available. If, for example, there are only three or four children who come to the nursery class, and only six or eight who come to the kindergarten room, while there are larger groups of older children to be provided for, some adjustments may be made. If one room is large enough, the nursery children may be grouped at one side and the kindergarten children at the other. If this separation is not feasible, it probably will be better to put the three- and four-year-olds together, and the five- and six-year-olds in another group, rather than have three-, four-, and five-year-olds in one room. The five-year-olds are too officious with three-year-olds and help them too much. The older ones are also apt to be restless if too much attention is paid to the younger children.

### **The Older Children**

The children of six and over are going to school and so are becoming accustomed to working and playing in groups. Larger numbers can be placed in one room than is wise in the case of the younger children. And there is opportunity for more flexibility in grouping.

The traditional grouping in the church organization for grade school children is to put the six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds (first, second, and third grades) into the primary department; and the nine-, ten-, and eleven-year-olds

(fourth, fifth, and sixth grades) into the junior department. The lesson materials for most of the denominations are planned for this grouping, and will likely be found most satisfactory in the majority of churches.

However, it is simpler to make adjustments in the use of the materials than it is to make adjustments in the number of children! If there is a larger number of children of one age group than of another, this fact must be considered in determining the grouping and room assignments.

In one church school there was a primary department of forty children and a junior department of fifteen. The primary children were seriously over-crowded, while the juniors rattled around in their quarters. The leaders found that the largest percentage of children were the first and second graders, while there were only three sixth graders, all boys. By putting the first and second graders in one department, and the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in the other, the children could be divided almost evenly between the two rooms.

But, of course, in the second department there would be a wide age range. Because the sixth graders were in the minority, they might easily become neglected and so a source of trouble. The leaders recognized this danger. Before the plans were completed, they had a conference with the older boys. One of the sixth graders himself suggested that some of the primary boys and girls be taken into their department. Another suggested that the sixth graders be assistants with the younger children. And so a very fine learning situation was planned and worked out. The older boys used their abilities in being useful and so felt important. Without calling forth this sense of importance there would have been disturbances as the older boys asserted themselves and let it be known that they were not to be classed with "babies."

## Class Groups

Within each department group there may be smaller class groups, if the number of children requires it. There will normally be a larger percentage of attendance to enrollment in the primary and junior departments than in the nursery and kindergarten groups. These older children are more independent of their parents, and are less likely to be kept at home because of illness and bad weather. If the number of children of each age group follows averages, half the hundred children will be under six, and half, six and over. But there probably will be about twenty children actually in attendance in the nursery and kindergarten departments together on any one Sunday, while the primary and junior departments will total forty.

If there is a room which provides as much as fifteen square feet per pupil (based upon average attendance) for the primary boys and girls and a similar room for the junior boys and girls, it will not be important to have a separate room for each class within these departments. The boys and girls may be grouped into classes of eight or ten members, each for special study activities, so that there may be opportunity for individual attention, and so that each pupil may use his own skills and abilities. A table with chairs grouped around it for pupils and teachers, may provide sufficient "separateness" for good work.

For many activities of the primary and of the junior departments, all the children will wish to come together. The planning of special enterprises, such as Christmas and missionary activities, and courtesies to other members of the church family, will probably be carried on by each department as a whole. Worship services, the learning of hymns, entertaining special visitors, will also be departmental activities. By rearranging chairs, the classes may be brought together quickly and easily.

## In the Large Church

There are many churches which have more than one hundred children. Many of them have as many as one hundred in each department, and a few have as many as a thousand children under twelve years of age. For these large churches, additional groups for children are needed. It is especially important to avoid crowding in the room for the little children. If there is an average attendance in the nursery class of more than fifteen children, there should be a second room provided. If more than twenty-five kindergarten children attend, a second room should be provided.

In these large churches, it is becoming the custom to provide an adequate classroom for each grade above the kindergarten, and to have a complete session for each grade in its own room, including worship, fellowship, and study. Under the grade plan, the classes in the primary and junior departments in large churches may have as many as thirty members, provided the teacher has at least one assistant and an adequate separate room.

In many churches, in addition to the children's own rooms, a chapel which is used for other purposes provides a beautiful setting for departmental and interdepartmental fellowship and services on special occasions.

Equipment and grouping may seem far from the heart of fellowship in the church and the guidance of children in Christian growth. It is true that boys and girls in ungraded groups, in very inadequate rooms, and with very limited equipment, have experienced inspiring fellowship and have learned vital truths from devoted teachers. But it seems reasonable to assume that with good grouping and equipment they might have learned more. There are few teachers who can overcome the handicaps of overcrowding, too limited time and space, and ungraded groups.



### THE CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

The emphasis upon graded churches has gained many values for children. But there has been one disadvantage. The plan has been interpreted by some ministers and lay officers to mean that they could turn over the children's groups entirely to the leaders assigned to these groups. This is, of course, a serious misinterpretation.

#### The Minister and the Children

The minister is the pastor of the children in the nursery department just as truly as he is the pastor of the adult members of his church. It is his responsibility to see that the welfare of the little children is kept before the entire membership. It is his duty to help the teachers assigned to the children's groups to be good teachers and to provide for the children opportunities for growth in understanding, and living by the Christian faith.

This does not mean that the pastor of each church is under obligation to teach the kindergarten leaders how to tell stories, or how to use art or music, or informal dramatizations in helping children learn. It does mean that it is his responsibility to see to it that help in such skills is made available to the teachers of the children of his parish. And it is his privilege to visit the children's groups, to become acquainted with the children as persons, to participate in their activities.

In a large city church whose minister was prominent in the affairs of the city and of the denomination as a whole, an excellent program of religious education was planned and carried out by the appointed leaders. But they felt that the children were missing an important part of their church life because they had no contact with the pastor. When he was approached about the matter, he explained that he did not know how to talk to children, that they embarrassed him. The leaders agreed

that he probably would not be very good at talking to the children! But they wanted him to know the children and have the children know him, so he was persuaded to visit the children's departments.

The first Sunday he was to go to the primary department. He was asked to come early so the children might be introduced to him as they came in. As the children were presented, he was interested to relate their last names to the names of the adults of the church whom he knew. He was interested, too, to note that many of the names were unfamiliar. Apparently, there were many children in his church whose parents were not members, or who were very inactive members.

As the session got underway, he found that he was accepted as a member of the group without undue fuss or ceremony. Because he was taller than the teacher, he was asked to help get from the storage file on the top shelf a picture which unexpectedly was asked for by the second grade. He was asked to help the third grade find in the department Bible a verse they were learning. The first grade invited him to see the picture book they were making for the nursery department.

After a while, the leader quietly drew the children together for a worship service. The minister brought a larger chair and placed it just back of the children's chairs. He participated in the songs, the responses, and prayers. He sensed a spirit of sincere worship, and found himself strangely moved. As he came out, he thanked the leader for asking him to come, and later, in the pulpit, he told the congregation that he had a real experience of worship with the primary children that morning.

On their part, the children had felt pleased to have the pastor of the church in their room. They reported it to their parents with real delight, and looked forward to his return. They had learned that he was interested in them, and their church life took on new importance.

In another church, a pastor who had taken time to become acquainted with the children had a rewarding experience. A junior boy was deeply disturbed because he felt that his parents were unhappy together, and were about to separate. One day, as the boy was going home from the playground, the pastor passed in his car and offered a lift. As they rode along, the pastor realized that the boy was troubled and took a detour through the park. "Is anything the matter, Dan? Anything with which your pastor could help?" And the boy haltingly told about the situation at home. The minister listened sympathetically, asked a few tactful questions, and then assured Dan that he would try to help. During the weeks that followed he was able to help. And Dan learned that his pastor was more than a preacher to the adults. He was a real friend, one to whom the boys and girls could turn in trouble for comfort and understanding and help, one to whom religion was alive, to whom God was real. And the child grew in his own understanding of the Christian faith.

### **Learning from the Life Within the Church**

Whether or not children are considered members of a church before they have assumed the formal vows of membership is determined by the policy of the different churches. But to all Christian churches, children are important, and the children of church members and those who attend the children's groups are thought of as being within the family of the local church. The attitude within the church family teaches children a great deal about the Christian way of life.

The junior department leaders cannot do very effective teaching about goodwill among men while there is a quarrel going on within the board of trustees about placing the contract for redecorating the building. The primary department leaders will have almost insuperable difficulties put in the way of their teaching the children

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," if the women's society and the leader of the Boy Scout troop have quarrelled about the use of the church dining room, or if the men's club and the young people's department have had a battle over an invitation to a speaker of whose politics the adults did not approve.

On the other hand, if the various organizations within the church face their differences in a spirit of mutual goodwill and confidence, and try to work them out within the bonds of Christian fellowship, the learning situation will be altogether different. When there is a difference of opinion regarding some matter of church policy or of the use of church equipment or of support of some national or international policy, opportunities should be arranged for conference or for study and discussion under competent leadership. After such study a way of handling the matter on which the opposing groups can agree will usually be found. Children living within a fellowship of persons who settle differences in such a Christian manner learn the meaning of goodwill among men. The very life of the church is teaching brotherhood.

A new church building was being erected in a suburban community. As the building got underway, it became clear that the costs would be far in excess of the original estimates. It was decided to build only part of the plant, and finish it at a later date. Then the question had to be settled about the use of the space available by the many groups who needed rooms. The women of the church had worked very hard for the money to have a lovely parlor. The location of this room was such that it would be one of the rooms finished in the first unit. The ladies were delighted. Then they realized that the room for the primary department was in the unit which would have to be deferred. What to do about it? Well, the women voted to let their room be used for the primary department and to wait for their longed-for and needed parlor. The

children were told about the decision, and they learned the meaning of "in honor preferring one another."

### **Fellowship in the Church Family**

But it is not only in settling differences and sharing church equipment that the church fellowship may make an important contribution to the Christian growth of the children. The members of the church family, all of them together, may plan activities which will bind them together in work and play, service and worship.

In one church, the celebration of its hundredth anniversary afforded opportunity for each group within the church to have part in an all-church activity, and so learn that "our church" helps people and is an important institution in the community. In another church, the women's society and the men's club and the children's groups worked together on a missionary activity to serve the children of the Philippines, each group doing what that group could do most helpfully as a part of the whole plan. The junior and junior high school departments of one church helped the women of the church in their special celebration of world service week by making a large map of the world, showing the location of the stations where the denomination had schools and churches and hospitals. The young people's department of another church and the men's club worked together to redecorate the nursery department, while the women's society made new curtains.

Special days in the church year, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter, offer opportunity for many all-church activities through which the children may learn the joys of Christian fellowship. A true celebration of Christmas will afford joy to the participants, deepen their reverence, and increase their appreciation of the meaning of the coming of Jesus to the world. Wearisome drill on "parts" in a play, tension and strain from trying to make



amateurs behave like professionals, and children behave like adults, inevitably create an atmosphere in which the children learn unchristian attitudes and habits. But thoughtfully planned celebrations of the birthday of Jesus in which children contribute songs and stories they have learned in their own rooms, poems and drawings and litanies they have made, and gifts they have brought for someone else, while the older participants make suitable contributions to a church family celebration, may become occasions rich in learnings of the true significance of this great festival of the Christian Church.

### **Fellowship in Congregational Worship**

It has often been asked, "At what age should children be expected to take part in the service of worship of the congregation?" The answer depends upon the general conditions in a given church, the denominational policy, and the sort of service that the local church offers. If the service is planned exclusively for adults, then of course children will not be likely to find it helpful. But if the service is planned as a family service, with dramatic elements, with portions of the music, the responses, the Bible readings, and sermon chosen with regard to the limitations and interests of the children, and if it is reasonably brief, the boys and girls will probably enjoy coming with their parents. Many ministers, with the cooperation of the children's leaders and of choirs, have planned such family services with excellent results. Other pastors feel that they wish to have opportunity in the morning service to minister especially to young people and adults and so prefer to have the children served in other ways.

But whether or not a particular church feels that the children should attend regularly the worship service of the congregation, certainly all the children should have some contact with the worship of the church family. The

younger children may come into the sanctuary a few times each year to see the windows, hear the organ, and see "where Mother and Daddy go to church." If the arrangement of the building makes it feasible, it is helpful occasionally to have these little children stay for the opening parts of the service and then retire to their own rooms.

The older children, those above the kindergarten, may sometimes participate in the service. One large church which has difficulty in seating those who crowd to its services, feels that the children under the high school department can have more meaningful services apart from the adults, and plans for the boys and girls excellent chapel services in which the pastor participates from time to time. But this church feels, too, that the boys and girls need some experience of being a part of the worship of the entire church family. Four times each year, the primary, junior, and junior high school groups take part in this service. On these occasions the regular order of service is followed. It is not a children's service. The three children's groups take over part of the musical responses usually rendered by the adult choirs. The anthems chosen for these Sundays are either sung by the children's choirs, are arranged for antiphonal singing with the adult choir, or the solo parts are sung by the children's choirs. The children's choirs are not invited to participate until they have a worthy contribution to offer.

This feeling of responsibility for the service heightens the attention of the boys and girls and reduces restlessness to a minimum. It is recognized that the boys and girls will not fully understand all the service, nor all the sermon. But by seeing the men and women of the community worshipping together, they may learn that it is important to worship God, and by feeling themselves a part of a great worshipping congregation, they strengthen their understanding that all men are brothers and God is the Father.

## CHAPTER V

# *Learning Through Activities*

A VISITING GRANDMOTHER HAD TOLD A LITTLE BOY A STORY in which to the child's delight the phrase, "up the rocky road to Dublin," recurred. Later, as he was playing in the yard with his wagon, he decided apparently to enact the "rocky road to Dublin," on the brick walk which wound uphill across the lawn to the front door. He was making his way slowly, pushing his wagon and singing, "Hugh take his wagon up the rocky road to Dublin; Hugh take his wagon up the rocky road to Dublin." His grandfather saw the little boy struggling in the hot sun, and hurried forward. "There now, Hugh, Granddaddy will help you up this steep walk," he said comfortingly, as he took the wagon firmly in tow and pulled it up the walk.

He was utterly unprepared for what happened. Hugh threw himself on the grass in a rage. "Hugh take his wagon up the rocky road to Dublin! Hugh take his wagon up the rocky road to Dublin!" he screamed.

Yes, the little Hugh's and Mary's and Joe's and Helen's do want to take their own wagons up the rocky road to Dublin! And it is only by being allowed to make plans for themselves, to carry the plans out, and to see and evaluate the results, that they grow happily and steadily.

Often less activity on the part of the teacher would promote more learning on the part of the pupils. The teacher who would have his pupils learn must often quiet his own activities and get his pupils underway. This means quite the opposite of no planning, no study on the part of the teacher. When the pupils get active they will make

demands on the teacher which will call for all the resources in knowledge and skill that he can muster.

### HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN?

Every mother watches with keen interest and joy the progress her baby makes in learning. From the helpless infant placed in her arms in the hospital, to the active, inquiring, responsive toddler in a little over a year! Human learning is truly wonderful to behold. But it does not come about in a haphazard manner. It proceeds according to well-established laws.

#### Learning Through the Senses

The little child learns first through his senses. He touches, smells, tastes, hears, sees. To tell a little child constantly, "Don't touch!" is in effect saying, "Don't learn!" In the nursery class of the church, ample opportunity should be afforded to the child to handle objects, look at and smell flowers, hear well-accented music. He will hear words, too, but the wise teacher will remember that the child of three years of age has a limited vocabulary and can follow only the simplest sentences.

The little child rarely learns without some explorations through his senses. "The ball is round," we may say, and encourage him to handle it to feel roundness. After he has handled balls and oranges and apples until he can generalize and summarize, the word "round," becomes a shorthand symbol. That is to say, words are summaries of experience. To crowd words upon a little child before he has had enough experience to summarize, is to confuse him and to block learning.

By the time he is four years of age, the child has a vocabulary of about 1,500 words, and can follow fairly complicated sentences, carry on sustained conversations, and listen to stories. It then becomes a temptation to resort to the "telling" method of teaching, and, because

this child can "tell back" much of what he hears, it is easy to be deceived into thinking that a child has learned something, when he has merely developed the vocal skill necessary to repeat the words.

### Encouraging Pupil Planning

Only "I" can learn for "me." And when the "I" is active, the "I" is learning. There has been some confusion in the thinking of parents and teachers about the meaning of activity. It has been thought that a child is active only when he is physically moving about or hammering or doing "handwork." Often a child is very active while he is sitting still. He is planning, purposing. If he himself is really in the planning, and not just observing the teacher's planning, this type of activity may be very fruitful for learning.

"But how," the teacher asks, "may I have the boys and girls do the planning? If they choose what they wish to do, they may choose something foolish, and so waste the precious time we have."

It is true that boys and girls require help and guidance in their choosing and purposing. The oft-quoted, "Children, what shall we do this morning?" if anything, suggests the futility likely to be experienced if the teacher abdicates. Yet equally futile is the effort of the teacher to force learning on a reluctant and sullen group of children. Under such conditions of mind and spirit, they resist learning.

Suppose children become absorbed in watching a woodchuck. They become curious about woodchucks. They want to know more about woodchucks. Under these conditions, the children are alert, ready to learn. Some suggestions about how to observe woodchucks, what to look for, are welcomed and eagerly carried out. Books about the habits of woodchucks are read with enthusiasm. The children work at learning with all their minds and spirits. If their observations and their reading give them the



information about the woodchucks which they wish to have, if the children find it pleasant and rewarding to learn about woodchucks, then they will find the learning experience good. It will give them satisfaction.

In the church school, also, the boys and girls need the stimulus of interest, of desire to learn. Because the leader knows that what he proposes to teach is tremendously important, there is the temptation to lay hands on the child and compel him to learn. But no sense of urgency on the part of the leader makes it possible to by-pass the laws of learning. The leader may, and should, do everything possible to stimulate the pupil's interest. But only as the child's own purpose to learn is enlisted will he learn readily and feel favorably disposed toward what he has learned.

Some junior boys and girls passed a Jewish synagogue. They looked in and were intrigued by the glimpse they had of the ceremony in process. They wished to find out about these observances. This was their purpose.

How could they find out? Whom could they ask? Could they arrange to visit the synagogue? Could they have a talk with the rabbi? Were there books and pictures which would help them learn about these ceremonials? Thus they were ready to make plans for realizing their purpose.

There came the time, after preliminary reading and after arrangements had been made, to visit the synagogue, observe the ceremonies, and talk with the rabbi. So they *carried out their plans*. And when they returned to their own church, they talked about the experience, recalled what they had seen and heard, came to the conclusion that they now understood a great deal better than they had understood before some of their Old Testament stories, and some customs of their present-day neighbors. And so they *evaluated* their learning. Learning is at its best when learners carry out all parts of the process themselves—purposing, planning, executing, evaluating.

## **Planned and Unplanned Learning**

Sometimes learning is unplanned. Children want to do something, and they get busy. In the midst of the activity they gain a great deal of information or an important attitude. A boy wanted a rabbit. He had no purpose to learn about rabbits. He simply wanted a rabbit as a pet. But he learned about feeding rabbits, and about his responsibility for his neighbor's garden, and a good many other useful lessons, through having a rabbit as a pet.

Sometimes the learning is planned. The child himself sets out to learn something which he wishes to know. Or the parent or teacher wishes to have the child learn something and plans ways of helping the child learn

### **ACTIVITIES WHICH PROMOTE LEARNING**

Whether planned or unplanned, learning takes place when children are active. A great many types of activity may be used in the church school to help children learn what is deliberately set-out-to-be-learned.

## **Drawing and Painting**

Almost all children like to use crayons or paints. Little children of the nursery and kindergarten age enjoy making great splashes of color with jumbo crayons or with large brushes on large sheets of paper on an easel. Older children enjoy design and an expression of their thoughts and ideas through drawing or painting.

If the child is to use drawing as a medium of expression, he must have something to express. "Now, let's all get paper and crayon and draw a picture." With so uninspiring an introduction, most children will either be listless or will draw something without meaning to themselves.

But suppose the children in the kindergarten have had a pleasant walk and have seen some trees covered with snow or a train or some exciting airplanes. They have come

back to their room. The leader wishes to give them an opportunity to think of the experiences they have had and to express their reactions. She may say, "That walk made me feel good inside. How did it make you feel? Let's get paper and crayon and tell how it made us feel."

The purpose here is not to get pictures which reproduce the objects which the children saw—though this is what they may draw. The purpose is to get them to express themselves, their reaction to the joy of skipping in the crisp air, to the happiness of being a part of a friendly group, to the sense of security that comes from feeling God's activity in making the world beautiful and interesting for his children.

Often the children under four will draw areas of bright colors, yellow and red predominating, in unrecognizable shapes—just joyous, free splashes. The children will tell the teacher what they have drawn if he looks appreciative and does not pry. It may be the sun, or a flower, or some other specific object. But it may be "skipping," or "having fun," or, more rarely, "saying, 'Thank you, God.'" Or it may not be anything at all, just splashes for the sake of splashes.

By the time a child is four, he will be able to make a recognizable human figure with head, features, arms, and legs. He sometimes leaves off an eye or a leg, and the figure has little proportion. But he can now tell by using crayons about people and what they are doing. Perspective will not be evident, but people can do things and feel things through the young creator's hands. Children can help their mother, they can feed their pets, they can meet their daddy, they can watch a bird, they can go to church, they can pray.

Up to about six years of age, the child will work with abandon and ease. He is not worried about not being able to draw whatever he wishes to draw. He may even startle his teacher by telling her he is drawing God. It is just as well for her to cover up her feeling of shock. The child

is not being irreverent or flippant. He is expressing confidence in his ability to draw anything.

The primary children are less sure of themselves. A child is likely to say, "I can't draw a dog," or a mountain, or whatever it is that, for the moment, overwhelms him. And when he does make a picture, he is more critical of it. He changes it while he is working, and may, in the end, tear it up in a spirit of discouragement. But this child also has a much better command over design. He can draw a landscape with a house, trees and flowers, each clearly recognizable, and each with some relationship to the other. These children can recall what they have seen, and draw from memory. They are more likely to draw realistically than the younger children: to be careful about windows and doors on houses, clown suits on clowns and skirts on women, to draw bare trees when snow is on the ground, and leafy trees when the flowers are in bloom.

They are more sensitive to the "right" color, too. Younger children will make a road bright yellow with great joy, while an older child will feel uncomfortable if it is not a more normal color. Flowers are given appropriate color, trees are green, the sky is blue, the sun yellow.

In the church school, primary children may make pictures of ways to show kindness, of ways to be helpful, of ways to help keep the church clean, of characters in their Bible stories. Frequently they do surprisingly good work. These pictures may be displayed in the primary room, or at a party for parents and other adults in the church. A few of them may be preserved. But, for the most part, they are useful primarily as learning experiences for the child, not as permanent decorations.

Junior boys and girls can often draw very lifelike figures, if they choose, and very clever caricatures, if they choose to do that. They know something about perspective and can do interesting landscapes and animals. They can illustrate a story with fidelity and feeling.

One sixth grade group made a really lovely book of the life of Jesus, containing stories they composed themselves, each illustrated with a water color painting.

These older children may also portray ideas or moods in paintings. An experiment with children between eight and twelve years of age revealed surprising ability to express feeling through drawings.\* They were asked to draw anything that came to their minds when they were afraid or sad or joyful. Some of the younger girls drew mice to express fear, and some of the younger boys drew fierce animals to express fear.

To express sorrow, one child drew a picture of some children standing around eating ice cream cones. One child, however, had no ice cream, and was standing apart from the others, the very picture of gloom. This was probably the representation of a real experience. One ten-year-old, disturbed by the thought of war, drew a picture of a large hand, representing the hand of God, and held within the hand were figurines representing the peoples of the world.

Joy was expressed by pictures of children wading, dancing, skating, playing games in a group, riding a horse. In all cases where color was used, "joy" was painted in bright colors; "sorrow" invariably in black.

These boys and girls also may draw, from models, detailed pictures of costumes, houses, ships, and the like, to show manners and customs of Bible times or of other countries today.

The growing abilities of these juniors may be used in the church school to carry out quite ambitious projects, such as making murals. On large sheets of wrapping paper, or newsprint thumbtacked to the wall, and put together with transparent tape, these murals may be painted with large bristle brushes and poster paints. After deciding

\* Oldham, H. O., *Child Expression in Color*, chapter 7.



what they wish to portray and how they wish to portray it, the children may sketch in the design in charcoal or chalk to get spacing, and then paint with free strokes.

In one junior department a very impressive mural was made on "Ways to Get Peace"; in another department, a four-panel mural was made showing "The History of Our Church," which was used in the celebration of the centennial year of the local church. In yet another department, a seven-panel mural was designed portraying the story of the children of Israel from wandering nomads, through the slavery in Egypt, the receiving of the Ten Commandments, the Kingdom of David, the captivity, the return and the rebuilding of the wall and ending with the Nativity scene, representing the supreme contribution of Israel to the world.

Such murals may remain up as long as they are interesting, but should be regarded as dispensable when the pupils are through with them. This use of art in large enterprises requires time and wise leadership, but it is an effective way of learning. It unifies a group through a common purpose and it usually is thoroughly enjoyed by the boys and girls.

### **Dramatic Expression**

As children are naturally artists, so they are naturally actors. They enjoy "playing a story," and take delight in "let's pretend."

This use of the child's pleasure in acting must not be confused with having him "learn a part." To put upon the child the thought and the words of someone else often destroys the very quality we are seeking to develop, the ability to express his own thoughts and feelings and ideas.

The little child hears a story of the little lost lamb. The story pleases him. He knows how the little lost lamb felt because he has been lost himself. He knows how good it is to be found. And so he can play this story with sincerity. All the children may be lambs except one who will be the

shepherd. As the teacher repeats the essential parts of the story, the lambs wander about, one of them running ahead of the rest and getting "lost." The others come back and cuddle in their safe home. Then the shepherd counts them. He knows one is lost! He hurries out, looking this way and that. Finally he finds the little lost lamb and brings him safely home again. Then the children may change from lambs to the shepherd's neighbors who come to "rejoice" with him.

Usually, the "playing" of a story will not follow the first telling. Kindergarten children love to hear a story again and again, and after they are thoroughly familiar with it, not when it is a new story, is the time they will enjoy playing it.

This free play-acting may help the child learn many attitudes which we wish to teach him. By dramatizing the situation, he may come to a much clearer understanding of sharing and taking turns than by learning rules or even hearing stories of others who shared and took turns. By dramatizing ways of helping at home, ways of behaving in church and the like, he can get a good start toward cooperative and reverent behavior.

For the older children, there is added social value in dramatic activity. The younger children do what they do as individuals. But with older children, the play must hang together with each person taking his own part, keeping in character, and doing it well. The members of the group are all dependent upon each other for the success of their common enterprise.

For primary children, simple costumes, properties and backgrounds help the children "act better." Only those things which the children can, with a minimum of help, make for themselves, are advisable. Orange crates may be used for furniture, screens for walls; sashes, head bands, jewelry, as accessories to suggest costumes. For these chil-

dren, too, it is helpful to write out the lines as these are agreed upon.

One third grade, studying a missionary unit on their church's work for children in China, made their room into a Chinese home in which they "played" that the missionary came to teach the children of the neighborhood. They learned about Chinese customs, the needs of Chinese children, the games they played, their attitudes toward their parents, and what the Christian churches of America were doing to help the Chinese.

The junior department may go as far in creating scenery and costumes and a complete text as their abilities and the time available make desirable. They can paint beautiful backdrops, following the same plan as is used for murals; they can use tools to make furniture; and they can prepare well-worded lines for the characters.

A variation to the usual play is a dramatic presentation using narration and music. A fifth grade prepared such a program which they called "The Followers of Jesus Remember Him." They prepared it in conversational form, recalling stories and incidents from the life of Jesus, with direct quotations from the Bible interspersed as choruses. This program is included in the Appendix, page 147.

### **The Child's Use of Music**

Though not as frequently used as are painting and drawing and dramatic activity as channels through which children may express their own ideas, songs and instrumental music may also be created by children. Little children of kindergarten age will make up songs spontaneously without much prompting. Edna Dean Baker tells of a little kindergarten girl who was delighted with the bouquet of the first spring jonquils which she saw as she came into her room on Sunday morning. She ran up to the flowers, touched them gently with her fingers, and then made up a little tune to which she sang, "I plant my

seeds, God sends his sunshine, here are the pretty flowers!"

Now, the fact that jonquils grow from bulbs, not seeds, need not trouble the teacher to the point that she feels called upon to correct the child's poetry! The importance of the little song was the expression of the child's joy in the flowers, her association of that joy with the thought of God's creative power and his plan for children's happiness.

The older children will be more critical of their efforts in this field as they are in the field of art, and so will be less spontaneous. But junior groups have made some really lovely songs with original tunes, and have made musical settings for some Bible verses. One junior group made a musical setting for selected verses from Psalms 104, which was used for years in the department.

### **Creative Literature**

To help children express themselves in the written word is more difficult than to help them express themselves through drama, art, or music. They are, in the case of writing, dependent upon a mechanical skill which is not perfected until after childhood has passed, yet which they are expected to have mastered. But literature can be oral! Many children enjoy making prayers or verses, telling original stories, or retelling in their own words a favorite story they have heard.

Children may voice their thoughts, their thanks, their petitions, their praise, their penitence, in prayers for their own use. They may also voice prayers in their church school group with no thought of literary form. The teacher should encourage any spontaneous expression on the part of a child of his own thoughts in his own words. But there is a value also, in helping children think seriously about the wording of their prayers, criticizing their own tendencies to make "asking" prayers too often, learning how one prays in the spirit of Jesus for others, and so coming to a fuller

understanding of Christian prayer. In such discussion, there may be worked out the wording of prayers which are at once childlike, Christian, and dignified in phraseology.

It is sometimes helpful to ask the older children to write stories of their own about carefully selected Bible passages. After reading and discussing such a passage until its meaning seems clear, the teacher may ask, "How do you think the people felt when Jesus said these things? What could have happened that is not told in the Bible story?" As the children develop their own story, the meaning of the sayings of Jesus becomes clearer.

A few prayers, poems, and stories written by children are included in the Appendix, page 151.

### **Trips**

It often happens that the pupils need to learn about some institution, or to see a picture in an art gallery, or to look up something in a library, or to call upon a public official to find out about the health facilities for children in the community, or to visit some other house of worship. To plan for such a trip, the pupils review just what it is they wish to learn. They check directions and transportation. Then they work out for themselves the questions they wish to ask. They consider how long it will take to go, find out what they need to know, and return. The teacher will leave as much of the planning as possible to the boys and girls themselves, but will make suggestions when they are needed to avoid disappointment or too great a waste of time. The group will make rules of conduct for themselves for the trip, and agree individually to observe the rules.

After the trip, the boys and girls may consider what they have learned and decide whether it has been a useful trip. It is often very helpful to write up a report of such a trip, both to summarize the learnings and to keep a record for future reference.



## Friendly Activities

There are many occasions upon which the boys and girls of the church may have happy and fruitful learning experiences through planning friendly gifts or services for others.

If children are to learn Christian brotherhood through such experiences, the enterprises must be planned and carried out in a spirit of brotherhood. The reasons why the gift or service is needed, just exactly what is needed, why we should send it, how it may be made or bought, how it may be sent—such questions must be considered carefully before any such enterprise is undertaken. It sometimes happens that boys and girls are asked to take part in enterprises which they do not understand or in which they feel little or no interest. Sometimes the need is so presented that the pupils have a feeling of superiority, and make their gifts in the spirit of the Pharisee rather than in the spirit of friendly sharing. In such cases, the chances are that what the boys and girls are actually learning is either resentment or prejudice.

But if the service undertaken by the pupils is planned and carried out in ways which enable them to put something of themselves into the gift, with thoughtful attention to the feelings as well as the need of the recipient, an activity may afford opportunities for growth in Christian understanding and goodwill.

One church group "adopted" a child in Germany, and planned food packages, clothing, books, greeting cards, and letters to be sent throughout the year. In another church, the children's groups worked with the adults to help a church in the Philippines, which had been bombed during the war, to be rebuilt and equipped. The kindergarten children sent a copy of their favorite picture book for the children. The primary boys and girls sent a copy of their favorite wall picture. The juniors sent a large pic-

ture map. The letters which came to them made it a most rewarding enterprise.

### Manual Activities

Children like to make things. In the vacation school there is usually more time and space available for the children's activities than is the case in the Sunday sessions. The children are less likely to wear their best clothes, and there is no question about the propriety of hammering and sawing and sewing on a weekday. For these reasons, the larger manual activities which require space and time and noise are more practical either in the vacation school or at a weekday meeting than in the church on Sunday.

But if something is needed which the boys and girls can make, it is worth the effort of finding a time and place for them to make it. One group of junior boys and girls wanted to attract birds to their church yard, which was the one green space in several blocks of apartment houses. They decided they would make a bird bath. The teacher did not know anything about making bird baths, but she felt that this desire on the part of the boys and girls presented a real opportunity for them to be co-operative members of the church family. So she helped them plan just what they should do.

First, they consulted the minister, explained their plan and why they wished to build a bird bath. He went with them to the chairman of the committee on buildings and grounds for the church, and the chairman agreed that a bird bath would be a good thing to have on the church lawn. But he reminded the children that it would have to be a bird bath that would be pleasant to look at, that would stand up, and that would fit in with the design of the church. They agreed.

Then they began trying to find out just how one built a bird bath. They looked at pictures, they asked their parents, and finally they learned that the sexton of the church knew

how to do that sort of work. They found out from him what they needed, how much it would cost, where they could get the materials, and how long it would take to build the bird bath. The sexton was interested and a good teacher, but he was very firm in his requirements that the work be done right. There were several setbacks, but finally the bird bath was completed. And it was right!

The chairman of the buildings and grounds inspected it and said it met all his requirements. Then he suggested that if the boys would set them out, he would buy some plants to go around the base. Finally, there came the Sunday when everything was ready. The chairman of the committee on buildings and grounds and the minister invited the congregation to come after church to see the new bird bath the junior boys had made. There was a formal service of acceptance of the gift, and the boys had a satisfying experience, both in carrying through a difficult job they had undertaken, and in making a contribution to the beauty of the church yard. And the birds liked it, too!

Through such activities as we have been discussing, the pupils learn. They learn through activities when they are interested, have a purpose in the doing, wish to work, and feel satisfaction in the results. The teacher will use activities in the church because she wishes her pupils to learn.

## CHAPTER VI

# *Learning Through the Arts*

THE USE OF ART AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CURRICULUM HAS come more and more to be accepted in education today. As we have noted in the preceding chapter, the primary purpose of art as used in the classroom today is to give the boys and girls an opportunity to grow and learn, to increase their experience, to relieve tensions, and to express what they wish to express.

In addition to their use in the creative activities of children, the arts may also be used as resource materials to which the children go for information and inspiration. So much that is great and illuminating in the expression of religious faith and aspiration has been preserved in the arts that our teaching of children would, indeed, be poor if we neglected to use these resources. These expressions of the ages becomes our children's rich heritage.

Again, however, it is necessary to voice a caution. Just because a work of art is great does not necessarily mean that it is helpful in the Christian nurture of children. Unless the picture, the piece of music, the poem or story appeals to the child and makes a contribution to his growth, it is not helpful to that child. Pictures and music and literature, then, as all other resources, should be made available to the child when he is ready for them, or when he feels a need for them.

### PICTURES AS RESOURCE

Pictures may be used to give information, to tell or recall a story, to create a mood.

## **Pictures for Information**

Pictures for information may be photographs, or drawings or paintings, showing just how something looks. With nursery children, such pictures should be large, uncluttered pictures, in clear, bright color, of objects in their world which will help them recognize the subjects and understand them—fruit, flowers, toys, animals, children, homes, families.

For older children, informational pictures cover a wide range of subjects: the customs and manners of other countries, conditions of social neglect in our own country with which the Christian Church must deal, Bible costumes and houses and customs, pictures showing how the text of the Bible was written and preserved through the ages. The lesson materials for the various age groups supply many of the pictures of this type needed for each course, and suggest others which may be ordered. The individual teacher will be alert to find pictures from many sources which will be useful to her group.

A junior class studying the story of how the Bible came to be was having difficulty visualizing the various stages of writing. The teacher ordered a set of reproductions of the murals in the Library of Congress depicting "The Evolution of the Book." These pictures made the development of writing clear in a few minutes.

## **Storytelling Pictures**

Storytelling pictures and pictures to be used in recalling stories are furnished with the lesson materials for the nursery, kindergarten, and primary departments. These pictures are used to help the children visualize the characters and settings of the story, and so to make the story more vivid and meaningful. It is usually wiser to present the picture after the story has been told rather than before. With younger children, after the story has been told the leader may stimulate conversation about the story by show-



ing the picture. Later, the pictures may be used to remind the children of a story. "Who can tell the story of this picture?"

Some of the pictures which are used as permanent pictures on the wall of the children's department may be storytelling pictures: for the nursery or kindergarten group, Millet's "Feeding Her Birds"; for the primary group, "The Angelus," by the same artist; for the junior group, Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper."

### Mood Pictures

Many of the permanent pictures, and some of the pictures displayed for special occasions are what, for want of a better name, may be called "mood" pictures. They help the child to share the experience of the artist for some value or some emotion. Landscapes, sea pictures, night skies, often portray the artist's feelings about what he sees rather than the exact photographic quality of the scene. "Vespers," by Gari Melchers, for example, portrays a mood of rest, quiet, meditation; while "Holiday," by Edward H. Polthast, portrays a mood of gaiety. The painting, "Peace and Plenty," by George Inness, induces an emotional response of joy and gratitude for the beauty of the earth.

Mood pictures may be used to help the children become ready for worship or for a discussion. Sometimes it is helpful just to present the picture and let the children look at it without comment. Sometimes it is helpful to call attention to it and interpret it.

"Suppose we all look at the picture for a few moments and not say anything at all." After giving opportunity to look at the picture quietly, then suggest, "Now suppose we all try an experiment. Let's all look at the blank wall there at the side of the room, and see how much of the picture we can see." After a moment, "Keep your eyes on the blank wall, and tell me what you can see." As the children tell what they see, the leader may note what has

impressed them. "Let's look at the picture again. What had you failed to see on the wall?" When the reports have brought out all the important parts of the picture, the leader may direct attention to what is back of the pictorial presentation. "What do you think the artist was trying to say in this picture?" After the children express their thoughts, the leader may tell the story of the picture.

If the picture is important to the study and the pupils are interested, the leader may go further. "Suppose we turn the picture around so we cannot see it. Now, suppose we try to draw our own idea of the picture, or of some part of it. We shall not try to copy what the artist has done. We shall try to do ourselves what he has done, to say in our own way what he has said."

### Children's Preferences in Pictures

Several studies have been made of children's preferences in pictures, most of them of the masterpieces included on various lists of pictures prepared for use in schools. Few present-day artists are represented in these lists, and some of the lists seem surprisingly stereotyped.

A study made by Jeanette Gertrude Morrison, "Children's Preferences for Pictures," included the preferences of 500 children in the first three grades. But the choices were limited to forty pictures which were included in most of the sixty-five lists prepared by art agencies and teachers' organizations for the guidance of grade school teachers in selecting pictures for children. Her findings show that "The Sistine Madonna," "Can't You Talk," and "The Madonna of the Chair" were the favorite pictures of these children, when they were asked to choose their favorite pictures from among the forty presented.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stuart's "George Washington" was actually first on the list, but the author explained that the study was made in February when the celebration of Washington's birthday was a feature in the school program and this picture was given prominent place.

Another study <sup>2</sup> was made of the preference of children in grades four, five, and six, in which pictures were grouped in pairs, one a picture recommended by a jury of competent teachers, and the other a picture not so recommended. The children's choices and the teachers' choices were far apart. In fact, the picture least favored by the children ranked first with the teachers. This suggests that probably teachers have not been aware as they might have been of what actually appeals to children in pictures.

Still another study of the types of pictures children like shows a very strong preference for pictures by children themselves. Reproductions of the Cizek pictures, made by children under the supervision of the famous artist-teacher of Vienna, ranked highest, and pictures by American children next. Pictures painted by famous artists especially for children were least popular. World masterpieces were in between. The rating is so striking that it is worth while to give it in detail:

The nine Cizek reproductions received	326 votes
Nine pictures by present-day children	229 votes
Nine world famous masterpieces	105 votes
Nine pictures by artists for children	24 votes

This bears out the suggestion that for children, clear-cut, forceful drawing, in bold, clearly defined patterns rather than fine line, and in emphatic, sharply contrasting color rather than subtle shadings, makes a picture attractive and meaningful. The Cizek reproductions are excellent, for this reason, and certainly the "Jesus and the Children" from these reproductions may well be among the first pictures chosen for children's rooms in the church.

<sup>2</sup> E. Wagmack and G. Henrickson, "Children's Reactions as a Basis for Teaching Picture Appreciation." *Elementary School Journal*, XXXIII, 267.

## Projected Pictures

Increasingly there are coming to be available useful resources in pictures to be projected upon a screen. The simplest sort of projected pictures are slides shown one by one. More complete programs are available in film strips. The film strips are made both from posed photographs and from drawings.

Both slides and film strips may be purchased or rented for relatively small sums, and the machines for projecting these types of pictures are not expensive or difficult to operate. They are especially useful for small groups, and may be used to give information, create moods, or recall experiences.

More difficult to operate, and more expensive to provide, are the resources for projecting moving pictures. But in many churches, the results are justifying the expenditure.

Denominational houses and interdenominational councils are now ready to supply both materials for projected pictures and instructions in their display. Equally important, they are ready to offer suggestions for the most helpful use of projected pictures in a program of religious education of children. There is no question that children enjoy these pictures, and there is abundant evidence to suggest that they learn readily from them. But a caution is needed. The mere installation of visual aids on a large scale will not remake a church school. They must be used in relation to the program and must be selected to achieve clearly defined goals in the understandings and attitudes of the boys and girls. Careful preparation is required of the teacher. With these cautions, the new resources promise to be of great help in guiding children in Christian growth.

## MUSIC AS RESOURCE

Music has long had a place in the services of the church. Much of the world's greatest music was composed for church use.

### Instrumental Music

Music has been used through the ages to stir or quiet the emotions of man: war music to send men forth to battle, dance music to set their feet flying, lullabies to send a child to dreamland, and religious music to lift their thoughts to God.

There is a great deal of beautiful recorded music now available for the use of churches which do not have a competent musician for each department, or which cannot afford so many pianos. With little children, music may be used to help them feel that they belong, are a part of the group; to give them that feeling of togetherness which is so essential to their happiness. A bit of music such as "The Grasshopper Dance" (Decca Records, 495), with bouncing, skipping sort of music, will help a child forget to be afraid, forget to feel lonely, as he joins the others in gay, free movement. If the children bump into each other, they can be helped to keep apart by referring to the music. "If we bump we are not listening to the music. Music makes us feel someone is near us so we can slow down and go in between."

When the time comes for seeking a response of quiet, "In a Monastery Garden" (Victor Record 35888) will be useful. "The music is going to play. Listen. It is music about a church, about a flower garden at a church. People are praying and singing in the flower garden at the church. The church bell rings. Listen."

With older children, there is a wide choice open to the leader. If the instrumental music is used always for a specific purpose, a purpose to further the learning of the boys and girls, there will be wise selections. Music with well-accented rhythm is needed for orderly movement from place to place, such as a processional or going from one room to another; music with quiet, soothing qualities to help the group become quiet, to help them to forget the pressing



interests of the outside world, and to concentrate their attention for a while upon God and his purposes.

The teacher referred to earlier who tried some experiments with her pupils in helping them to express emotions in pictures and in color, also experimented with helping them to express their response to music through painting pictures. Children from ten to twelve years of age were asked to listen to a piece of music, and to paint whatever the music suggested to them. The results were well worth the consideration of other teachers.

Some such use of music in the children's department offers an excellent learning opportunity. Attending to great religious music with their hearts and their minds, and giving expression to what they have heard and experienced, may be an enriching spiritual experience.

### Vocal Music

Most of the music used in the church school, however, is not instrumental but vocal music. We sing more than we listen!

There are now available excellent collections of children's songs for the various age groups. The symbolic hymns of the past generation, such as "Rock of Ages," "Lead Kindly Light," "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood," have no place in the children's departments. And the so-called "Gospel hymns" of more recent days sometimes express strange theology and often phrase expressions in verse which lack the inspiring quality of great poetry. It is wiser for the sake of the child's Christian growth to use songs and hymns which express in simple, well-chosen words the joys of living in God's world, the happiness of human fellowship, the response to the great affirmations of the Christian faith in terms of friendly, brotherly conduct, and the aspiration of man to be a worthy child of God and a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

In teaching songs to little children, it is well simply to

sing them when the occasion arises. Songs should be brief, one or two stanzas, set to simple melodies. As the leader sings the words distinctly and with the tempo appropriate to the words, the children soon will begin to sing with her. Singing the song over and over several times helps the children to become familiar with it and to begin to like it. For they will not really like it until they can sing it.

Primary and junior boys and girls may most helpfully be introduced to a new song at a time when need for that particular song has been experienced. They need songs to express their joy, their aspirations, their resolutions, their praise, their sense of fellowship with one another, their penitence, their commitment.

Usually it is better to introduce the song as a whole, that is, words and music together, sung to the children. A song has words and music; therefore, it is well to keep words and music together. After it has been sung through, the leader may ask the children to tell what the song said. This will help them direct their attention to the thought of the song. Then they may find it in their songbooks, if they have books, and follow as the song is sung again. Further discussion of the thought of the song may follow. The pupils may be invited to sing it with the leader, softly. Then again. The song may then be put aside for that session, and recalled at the next. Thereafter, they will likely be able to sing it in their service with understanding and pleasure.

Each song used in any session should be used for a specific purpose, because it is needed, and it should be chosen because it serves that purpose. But singing together for pleasure is a legitimate part of the fellowship in the children's departments. The songs selected for this purpose should be fellowship songs, not prayer or hymns of dedication. To sing a list of hymns, chosen at random, with no attention to the thought they express, would seem to be a

very poor use of the precious time available to the church for the religious nurture of children.

### CHORAL SPEECH

Related both to music and to literature is the use of speaking choirs to render materials chosen for religious value. For older children, this new art form has fine possibilities. Through its use they can come into a larger appreciation of many of the great passages of the Bible, and of other religious literature. First the thought of the passage must be interpreted so that it may be expressed intelligently. Next, the boys and girls may memorize the passage, noting as they do so any natural divisions in the thought. Then they may practice speaking clearly in unison, emphasizing the thought by the tempo of speech, the spacing of phrases, modulation.

This may be as far as a group is prepared to go, and such rendering of a worthy selection is an excellent way to appreciate it. If the skill of the leader and the group justifies it, voices may be grouped into higher and lower voices and parts assigned as in singing. Passages which have been used successfully in this manner include Psalms 8, 100, 117, 121; Job 39:14-23; Matthew 5:1-16; I Corinthians 13:4-8; I John 4.

### RELIGIOUS DRAMA

As distinguished from the free play of little children and the dramatic working out of their own interpretations of material in the departments of the older children, there is the use of religious drama as a resource. There are several fine pieces of literature in dramatic form which have high religious value. For the most part these dramas are written for and should be produced by the older boys and girls and the young people and adults of the church.

When, in an all-church enterprise, a religious drama is to be presented which calls for the participation of chil-

dren, they may be introduced to the experience in a way which will make it meaningful to them. Certainly they should not be expected to "learn lines" and "rehearse" in ignorance of what the entire production is all about. The story of the drama should be told, the purpose of putting it on at this time explained, so that the child feels he has a place in a real activity. Then his own part should be interpreted to him.

First, he may be asked to say in his own words what he is supposed to say to make sure that he has the meaning in mind. Only then should he be drilled in the exact words which he is to say in the play.

The rehearsals should be planned to avoid wearing out the players and making them cross and unhappy. The time and energy required to produce a religious drama is well-invested if the drama is a worthy interpretation of a significant religious idea or purpose, for drama both stimulates thinking and appeals to the emotions.

#### USING LITERATURE AS A RESOURCE

Story-telling is the most usual method of teaching used in the children's departments. And because children love stories as they do, church schools have a great asset when the teachers there are good story-tellers.

#### Story-telling

It cannot be said too often that it is not the purpose of the church school to tell stories, not even to tell Bible stories. It is the purpose of the church school to guide children in Christian growth. In this purpose it often finds telling stories a very useful method.

Yet it is easy to expect too much of story-telling. Because a child listens to a story does not guarantee that he is learning from it what the teacher wishes him to learn. If he is told a story of Daniel refusing the king's meat, with the purpose of helping him to learn to stand for the right in

hard places, it does not always follow that this is what he learns. There will be transfer from the story to the child's own life to the extent that the elements in the story are familiar. Now, present-day American children are not in the situation in which Daniel found himself; so the elements are not very similar.

To help the child "make connection," and yet avoid the offensive "pointing of a moral," the teacher may consider before the story is told the situations in the child's life in which the same quality of courage is required as that shown by Daniel. When the children have their own problem in mind, the teacher may say, "There is a story in the Bible of a boy who was in just such a jam. Of course, what he had to decide was not the same question you have to decide, because he lived long ago in a very different country. But what he did may suggest something to you."

After the story is underway, to interrupt it is to ruin it, for the story is a work of art. It is a unity, a whole, just as is a piece of statuary or a beautiful building. If the story is to have an opportunity to appeal to the children it must be handled as a work of art, as a whole, without interruptions and without the interjections of any comments of the teller. Let the story speak for itself. It will if it is a good story. The children will live with the characters, actually sharing their experiences.

If a story is to be well told, it must have a structure. First, it must have a beginning. This beginning must set the scene and introduce the characters. Then the characters must be in that setting, must be consistently themselves, and must take over the situation. To interpolate, "And then I think Joseph must have . . ." is to get Joseph off the stage and put the story-teller on. "And then, children, what do you think Joseph did?" brings the children back to themselves. Let Joseph do his own thinking and speaking and acting in his own character. Keep him on the stage.



After the character is introduced and the scene set, something must happen right away. The character must purpose, plan, carry out his plan, meet other characters, react to them, face problems, find solutions to them. The action must move from one incident to the next without tedious detours or unnecessary explanations. And each incident must grow out of those that have gone on before, so that the child understands why events come to pass as they do.

The incidents, however interesting in themselves, must get somewhere. They must not be just one incident after another. They must bring the characters to the place where they are able to solve their problem. This is the climax. After the climax is reached, the conclusion should follow quickly. The ends must be tied up neatly and the story concluded. And when it is ended, let it stand in its own right. If it has been a worthy story, welltold, it will win response on its own merit.

Most of the lesson materials contain stories written out for the teacher to tell. And most of them are well written. But no teacher can tell effectively a story someone has written without getting inside it herself and making it her own. She will not memorize it as it is written in the book, but she will live with it until she knows it. She will tell it aloud to herself or to some willing relative several times before she tells it to her class. When she knows it and when she appreciates it, she is likely to tell it well.

The parent and teacher will wish to select other stories for telling to their boys and girls, stories to meet special needs that arise, stories to supplement those provided in the lesson materials, stories for special days, stories for use in worship, stories for parties and recreation. Some books of stories for telling are given in the Appendix, pages 157-160.

### **Books for Church School Use**

Not only through telling stories, but also in encouraging children and boys and girls to read books and poems

for themselves, will the teacher seek to make literature a resource in Christian growth. Most of the larger towns and all the cities now have children's rooms in the public libraries.

The public librarian and the school librarian are well informed about the best books for children and more often than not are eager to help the church school worker know about these books and to cooperate in plans for having the children read certain books at certain times.

Books specifically related to the church school lesson materials, such as books on Bible manners and customs, books of historical background for the period covered by the materials, and factual books about the countries in which the denomination has missionary work, will all be helpful resource materials.

*A Picture Book of Palestine*, by Ethel Smither,<sup>3</sup> will be useful for primary and junior departments. For the older children, Genevieve Foster's *Augustus Caesar's World* is a really distinguished treatment in text and pictures of the period of history just before and during the time of Jesus. It will be excellent background material for all New Testament studies.

More general books with specific religious emphasis are also useful both to the teacher and parents and to the children. For the nursery and kindergarten children, such books as *Bible Books for Small People*, *There Was Once a Little Boy*, by Dorothy Kunhardt, *My Prayer Book*, by Margaret Clemens, *In the Morning*, a selection of Bible verses for young children with illustrations, will both delight and help little children. For older kindergarten and primary children, *Tell Me About God*, and its companion books by Mary Alice Jones, *Let's Go to Nazareth*, by Elizabeth Reed, and for older boys and girls, *Many Mansions*,

<sup>3</sup> Any book suggested in these pages may be ordered from your denominational publishing house or book store.

by Jessie Orton Jones, *One God*, and *Their Search for God*, by Florence Mary Fitch, will be welcomed.

### **Books for the Child's Own Choice**

Parents and teachers are interested, not only in the books which are specifically related to the program of Christian education in the church, but also in all the child's reading. They know that the books he reads influence his development for good or for ill. They know that simply to denounce a certain book or type of books is not to be helpful to the children, but that positive suggestions must be made of good books, books which are good from the standpoint of the child as well as from the standpoint of the adult. For if a child does not like and enjoy a book, it is not reasonable to assume that he will be influenced for good by it.

There are now available a wealth of books of high literary quality, which are unusually attractive, and which meet the social demands which the present world makes upon literature. Books of fancy to stimulate the imagination, such as *The Red Carpet*, by Rex Parkin, for the younger children, and *Twenty-one Balloons*, by William Pène du Bois, for older children; books about animals which give joy to almost all children, such as *Autumn Comes to Meadow Brook Farm*, by Katherine Southwick Keeler, for the younger children, and *Misty of Chincoteague*, by Marguerite Henry, for the older boys and girls; books of humor just for fun, such as *Captain Dow and the Hole in the Doughnut*, by Le Grand; books of everyday child life, such as *Thimble Summer*, by Mary Entwistle; books of all these types have an important rôle to play in the child's development.

There are many "books with a purpose" which parents and church school teachers will wish to call to the attention of their children—remembering, always, that no matter how good a book may seem to be to an adult, unless the child enjoys it, it is not likely to be good for him.

One of the great needs of American life is for understanding among the persons who live in different parts of this diverse country, and who are of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Such books as those by Lois Lenski describing realistically the life of certain cultural groups in our country, *Blue Ridge Billy*, the story of a boy of the mountains, *Judy's Journey*, a story of migrants, are authentic in their factual background and also good stories in which the characters are real, flesh-and-blood personalities.

To help white children understand Negro children, there are now available some books of high quality. For primary children *Tobe*, by Stella G. Sharp, is a collection primarily of photographs of a little Negro boy in North Carolina, and *Bright April*, by Marguerite de Angeli, is a story of a Negro girl in Philadelphia. For the older boys and girls, *Call Me Charley*, by Jesse Jackson, and *My Dog Rinty*, by Ellen Tarry and Marie Hall, are well done.

*Children of the Promise*, about Jewish children, by Florence Crandall Means, will be useful and interesting reading for boys and girls in the primary and junior groups, and Mrs. Means's *The Moved-Outers*, about Japanese youth, will be profitable for the older boys and girls.

Present-day American children have available excellent books about boys and girls of other lands. Some of them are informational books, well written and well illustrated. But there are, also, now available storybooks with well-developed plots, in which the setting is some other land and the hero a native of that land. Children like the stories as stories, and the heroes as real persons.

*Li Lun, Lad of Courage*, by Carolyn Treffinger, is a story about a Chinese boy, with authentic background and the "feel" of China. But it is also a story about a boy who was afraid and became courageous, a universal story. *Daughter of the Mountain*, by Louise Rankin, is the story of a Tibetan girl, but it is also the story of a child's love for a

dog, well written and appealing. *Faraway Holiday*, by Eula Long, is an easy-to-read story of a Mexican family.

There are available for the guidance of parents and teachers some carefully chosen lists of books for children, many of the lists being classified and annotated. Some of these lists are included in the Appendix, page 157.

Books may be real bridges to help boys and girls cross the chasms which separate them from their fellows; bridges which bring together many groups of many backgrounds in friendship and understanding.

#### RECORDINGS AS RESOURCE

Mention has been made of musical recordings for use in religious education. There are coming to be available useful recordings of dramatizations, stories, bedtime programs, Bible readings, and the like, which offer excellent materials for use both in church school programs and in the home. By selecting the recordings with care, and using them with a definite purpose, the leader may find that such resources enrich the child's life and increase the sense of fellowship within the church school or family group. Definite suggestions for the use of recordings, and information about sources, costs, equipment, and current recordings, are available from the denominational and international boards of religious education.



## CHAPTER VII

# *Learning Through Worship*

"IF I ASK GOD, WILL HE TELL ME?" RALPH WANTED TO KNOW. His mother had been trying to answer his incessant questions and had become involved beyond her depth. "Only God knows the answer to that question," she had said. And the child's response was the normal response for him to make. "If I ask God, will he tell me?"

To little children, it seems reasonable and right that they should talk with God and that God should talk with them, directly, in plain language. As they grow older and the world presses in, they come to expect less direct response from God. They come to feel that he is not likely to speak in audible voice in answer to their questions, and that, for one reason or another, they do not get exactly what they ask him to give them.

It is the privilege and responsibility of the parent and teacher to help the child grow in the understanding that God does speak to him, and in the desire to listen, and the ability to understand the language in which God speaks.

### GOD SPEAKS

That God does speak to the listening and obedient heart is the testimony of the great souls of the ages. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," has been the prayer of thousands of men and women and boys and girls through the ages, and the prayer has been answered.

Yet there can be no doubt that, to present-day boys and girls, the voice of God often does not come clearly, and that they have difficulty in understanding the language

in which God speaks. They are surrounded by a civilization which is "rich in things, and poor in soul," which has developed mechanical aids to comfortable living much more rapidly than it has developed great persons who know the goal of living.

Those children need opportunities to be still and know that God is God, that he is greater than man, greater even than man can know, and that though he is very great, he is also loving and concerned about the happiness and welfare of each of his children. They need to worship God.

Worship, in the Christian sense, has two focal points: God and man. To plan elaborate rituals to honor God, for God's sake, on the one hand, or to assume that man may carelessly dash to God with any request which comes to his mind, on the other, is not to worship God in the spirit of Jesus. A child may go to God directly about any problem or joy he wishes to take to God. But from the beginning of his relationship with God, the little child may be taught that one does not make demands upon God, that one does not go to God in a thoughtless or careless manner. One talks to God happily, and simply, in a spirit of seriousness and earnestness.

If one believes in the God of Jesus, then one does believe that God both hears his children and speaks to them, that between God and man, even the least of the children of man, there may be real and vital fellowship. Jesus shows man that God is approachable as well as great, that man may have fellowship with him as well as stand in awe of him.

### Understanding Through Worship

Worship in the Protestant churches seems to be regarded primarily as praising God, confessing one's sins to God and receiving forgiveness. There is less emphasis upon seeking light through worship. Yet illumination, the opening up of fresh insights, the stimulation of new thoughts,

ideas, ways of meeting situations, is one of the great outcomes of worship.

The Bible abounds in testimony to the reality of this experience. Elijah under the juniper tree, Nehemiah preparing to address the king, Peter on the housetop in Joppa—they all learned through worship new ways of dealing with their life problems. Modern worshippers, too, bear testimony in their own experience that if any man lacks wisdom and asks of God it shall be given him. "No angel visitant, no opening skies," is likely to be the experience of most worshippers, but in quieter, subtler ways, one comes to know what had before been shrouded in darkness.

In a junior department, there had developed a serious conflict over the use of a certain desirable room. Several groups wished to have the room for their own exclusive use. The atmosphere had grown tense and unfriendly. Both the leaders and the children were cross. One of the leaders said, suddenly, "You know, we are, all of us, forgetting something. We are forgetting God." The children looked puzzled. One of them asked, "What has God got to do with this?" The leader answered, "He knows the right answer to our argument." The children continued to seem puzzled. So the leader went on. "We are forgetting that God is interested in everything we do. He is interested in this junior department. He is interested in its being a good junior department. It can't be a good junior department when we are quarreling about who is to have the best room. It is good for us to talk it over, and for each of us to say why he thinks his group needs the room. But if we can't agree about it, then we need some help. We need more understanding about what is the best use to make of the room. Maybe we should stop talking and arguing about it and pray about it." This seemed a new idea of prayer to some of the children. Some of them did not want to take time to pray. They wanted to settle the question! But after

a few minutes, most of them seemed to be willing to try praying about it. So they sat down and became quiet.

The leader suggested that everybody think silently for a minute about why he felt his group should have the room. Then she suggested that everybody think silently for a minute about why some other group felt it should have the room. After the two brief periods of silence, she voiced a simple prayer for help in making a wise decision in this very specific situation. She asked for help in thinking clearly about the use of the room, help in understanding the needs of each of the groups which wished to use the room, help in thinking of ways in which each group could get its work done best, help in using their minds to think useful thoughts instead of thinking unfriendly thoughts about one another.

When she had finished, there was a moment of continuing quiet. Then one boy said, "I thought of something. The room we have now would be all right for our group if we could get a better light for our map. I think maybe my dad would lend us a fluorescent lamp he has at home."

Then one child after another made a suggestion. They were constructive suggestions now, serious efforts to work out the problem in the light of the best interests of every group. And before the hour was over, a problem that had divided the junior department for two weeks was solved in what everyone agreed was the right way.

Perhaps the reader is saying, "Well, it doesn't work that way in my department!" And perhaps it will not. One has to learn to worship through worshipping. Children who have never expected to get new insights, new ideas through worship, may not, all of a sudden, recognize them. But, though it does not always come about that an immediate and acceptable solution presents itself, experience has proved over and over that, as one prays about a specific problem, new insight does come. Ways of working out difficulties that have not been thought of before come to

mind, ways of behaving that have never been tried suggest themselves, sources of further information are called on, and new ideas about the nature of the universe are born. The statement of the great scientist of long ago, "I think God's thoughts after him," is not merely a poetic way of speaking. It represents a basic truth. Men who seek to know the laws of God and the purposes of God do appear to become increasingly able to think God's thought after him, and so to come to know more and more about the way of life for man that brings true happiness for himself and his fellows.

### USING AIDS TO WORSHIP

To help children direct their thoughts to God, teachers and parents may use the experiences of other worshippers as these have been recorded in music, art, literature, drama, and they may use the symbols and sacraments of the Christian Church. It should be understood that any such materials are helpful to children only to the extent that they may become for the child a language of worship or the source of fresh insight. Beautiful ceremonials of the church are impressive to children long before they understand their meaning, and so long as they are impressive, the child may be invited to participate in them or to observe them. The sense of fellowship in the enjoyment of beauty within the environment of the church is inspiring. But unless the meaning of the ceremonial becomes clear to the child, it will not increase his understanding of God and his purposes; it will not bring light.

It is important, then, that the materials selected to help the child grow in the ability to worship be materials which he can understand, but also materials which present Christian ideas and attitudes toward God.

Some material for use in children's worship may be beyond their immediate experience. It may be "out there, ahead," something toward which they are moving but have



not yet reached. If there is in the proposed material a Christian interpretation which it is reasonable to expect a child of a given age to be able to begin to understand, then the fact that he does not yet understand it fully should not prevent its use. How to keep a balance and avoid, on the one hand, material which is so close to the child's everyday experience that it is obvious and lacking in stimulus and inspiration; and to avoid, on the other hand, material which is so remote from present experience and understanding that it is confusing, presents a real challenge to the leader of children's worship.

### Using the Bible in Worship

In the Bible are found the most confident expressions of man's dependence upon God and of the concern of God for his children. Prayers and psalms of joy and petition reveal a vivid consciousness of God. To acquaint children with some of the great devotional material in the Bible may help them to worship God in spirit and in truth.

With little children, the materials used will keep "close to home" and not attempt to compass the universe. Those verses simple enough to be used as a language of worship by a little child will be chosen: "He has made everything beautiful in its time"; "A child is known by his doings"; "Love one another"; "We give thanks unto thee, O God, we give thanks," "God is love." Using the last verse mentioned while enjoying a walk in outdoors, or before a lunch, or after a happy experience of fellowship in the kindergarten room, will help the child find in these words a language through which he can express his diffuse thoughts of God's goodness. And through the expression the thoughts will become more clear.

Some of these verses and other brief thoughts of joy and gratitude have been set to simple, singable tunes, and these songs can become a language of worship for the little child. A clear picture of some experience with which the

child is familiar, such as a night sky, or a garden in bloom, or a mother feeding a child, may be used to recall these verses and so make articulate the child's thoughts of God.

With older boys and girls, helpful responsive readings may be built from verses which the boys and girls have learned, and larger selections from the Bible may be used, such as Psalms 100 for primary children, and Psalms 121 for juniors.

To some extent with primary children and to a larger extent with juniors, readings from the Bible, carefully chosen and brought together for continuity and dramatic form, may be a source of joy and illumination. In a junior department, a leader who enjoyed reading aloud and who had an appreciation of the literature of the Bible, often made readings by bringing together related passages from several places and arranging them in a manner which revealed most clearly the meaning.

Sometimes these readings were biographical, telling in the strong, simple language of the Bible, and with a minimum of connecting sentences, the complete story of some Bible character whose life seemed to be of particular help to the boys and girls at that particular time. Joseph, Moses, David, Amos, Nehemiah and Daniel were some of the biographical readings prepared. Often the readings were from the Psalms, sometimes from the Proverbs, sometimes from the Prophets, and sometimes from the Epistles. Always, at Easter, there was a reading of the life of Jesus, prepared in two parts, one for Palm Sunday and the other for Easter. And always at Christmas there was the full Christmas story.

There also may be readings from the Bible pointed to situations in the lives of the children upon which specific light is needed. A service of worship planned to help the children understand the purpose of God that his children should live together with thought for one another, might use the story of the Good Samaritan to show the boys and

girls clearly how this purpose may be realized in human relationships.

Readings arranged to use special passages within a framework of interpretation are useful. One group of boys and girls planned such a responsive reading on the theme "We Remember Jesus," included in the Appendix, page 154.

We may, then, use material from the Bible in worship, both to help children say what they wish to say, through using passages as their own language of worship, and for illumination, to help them see God's purposes revealed in the lives and teachings of the persons who live in its pages.

### **Using Music in Worship**

The selection of instrumental and vocal music to help the children clarify and express their thoughts of God is an important part of the leader's responsibility. As has been suggested in a previous chapter, music is useful for many purposes in a program of Christian education. In worship, soft, melodic music may help the boys and girls become quiet—not merely physically quiet, but spiritually quiet—so that they are ready to direct their thoughts specifically toward God. A call to worship to which the children respond brings them a bit farther along the way. A hymn of invocation, acknowledging the greatness and glory of God; a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, expressing gratitude to God for his goodness to his children; a hymn of confession, acknowledging that one has not done all that one might have done, or has done what one should not have done; a hymn of dedication, expressing the purpose to live in accordance with what one knows of the will of God—songs of all these types have a place in the primary and the junior departments as part of the worship. But each hymn will be selected because it says what it is reasonable to assume the boys and girls will wish to say, and each hymn will be used at that time in the service when it is

reasonable to assume that they are ready to say it. For example, it is not likely that they will be ready for a dedication hymn at the beginning of the service. Such a hymn will rather be the climax of the worship service, the response of the children to the thought of God's purposes which has been brought before them.

If hymns are to be a language of worship through which the child comes to a clearer understanding of God's purposes, the words and the tune must be considered carefully to make sure that they have a contribution to make.

Symbolic language, figures of speech, are not likely to be understood by children before junior high school, and are almost certain to cause confusion for primary and for most junior boys and girls. It is well, therefore, to find hymns which use simple language. It is also important that the language of the hymn be worthy language. Sometimes hymns use extravagant or hackneyed language, and so discredit the thoughts they seek to express. Sometimes the theology of the hymns is far from that of the church to which the child is related and so causes him confusion. Hymns in worship are used to help the child come to a clearer understanding of the purposes of God for his life, and they should be selected in the light of this purpose.

#### HELPING CHILDREN TO PRAY

Prayer is the heart of worship, for prayer, in the Christian sense, is the direct communion of the human personality with God. Almost every human being has, at one time or another, cried out to God. Perhaps it was in fear, in anguish, in sorrow, or in despair.

This turning to God in extremity is not to be dismissed as unworthy. When the thief on the cross cried out, Jesus heard him and saved him. And God is like Jesus. He will not turn away from one of his children in his need, even though that child has for many years ignored him. But certainly it is more worthy for men to live all their lives

in fellowship with God, seeking at every point, and in every situation the wisdom of God, the comfort and the courage of God in living life to the full.

The Christian parent and teacher will not assume that the child has an "instinct" to pray, and so does not need to be taught. The child does need to be taught to pray. He needs to learn that, though God always loves him and always helps him, God does not always give him the things for which he asks. He needs to learn that God answers prayer by saying "No," as well as by saying "Yes." He needs to learn what to pray for, and how to understand the language in which God speaks to answer his prayers. It is the dullness of man's ears, rather than the aloofness of God, which makes it appear that God does not answer when his children call upon him. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

With the older children, one may talk over the meaning of prayer and the practice of prayer, to provide opportunity for clarifying any wrong ideas, and for summarizing experience. But generally it is far more fruitful to give boys and girls experience in prayer than to discuss prayer.

If the adults with whom the children live frequently voice their prayers in the presence of the children, and if the prayers are Christian in their purpose and expression, this opportunity will mean more than almost anything else to the children in learning to pray. They will gradually build up an understanding of prayer through hearing these prayers.

But the boys and girls must have opportunity, also, to voice their own prayers. In helping little children voice prayers, it is well to express only one or two thoughts at a time. "Thank you, God, for the sunshine and the flowers." "Help me, God, to remember to put away my toys." "Thank you, God, for the nice time at the beach."

The little children have no inhibitions and will ask for anything they wish to have, from a baby brother to an



automobile. While these little children should be allowed to approach God in whatever way seems to them important, as they grow older, they may come to know that some ways of praying are better than others.

For the Christian, the prayers of Jesus are the great examples. And as Christians we are taught to offer our prayers in the name of Jesus. We must know Jesus and what he stood for and what to him was important. So we shall know for what we should pray. Though we may not expect children to learn all at once, we may expect them to learn, as they grow in knowledge of Jesus, that one does not pray in his name for selfish ends, nor for what will hurt someone else, nor ask for oneself the good things of life with no concern about others.

In small groups in the family and the church school class, boys and girls may be encouraged to pray aloud as a part of group worship. It is not wise, however, to ask a child to lead a larger group in prayer. It is better to help the members of a group think together about what they wish to pray, and either plan the wording together, or ask the leader to word the prayer for them. If the children wish to pray for someone who is sick, they may talk over the matter of how one prays for a sick person. If they wish to pray for the success of some enterprise of the church, such as a missionary project, or the building of a new church, they may consider how one prays for such matters. Through the experience of praying they learn to pray.

It is useful, also, to help the older boys and girls to know some of the prayers of other Christians. Beginning with the Lord's Prayer, they may be made acquainted with the prayers of some of the great Christians of other years and of other lands. Some of the communions make larger use in their general worship of the prayers of the Christian Church than do others. But to help the older children feel that they are a part of the fellowship of Christians throughout the years and over the world, is a source of inspiration.

To help them use the prayers of some of these great souls is to help them come to a finer understanding of prayer.

Children may also learn to pray through the use of litanies. This form of prayer has the great advantage of breaking up the thoughts of a prayer into small units, so helping the children keep their attention concentrated upon each thought.

The litanies may be worked out by the boys and girls themselves, or they may be taken from the liturgy of the church, with, it may be, some adaptations for clarity. In such prayers, there is the expression of one thought, which the leader voices, and then a response in which all the members of the group participate. Sometimes the response is repeated after each thought; such as, "Hear our prayer, O Lord," or, in a litany of thanksgiving, "We give thee thanks, O Lord."

The response may be either spoken or sung. Sometimes the responses vary. In this case, the boys and girls have the litanies written out in their departmental "service book." These books are often loose-leaf notebooks, in which various materials are inserted as need arises. Some adult member of the department or friend either types or mimeographs the sheets. Many departments find such collections of material, made up of selections from the literature of the church, and the original compositions of the children, very useful in promoting sincere worship through suitable materials. Examples are included in the Appendix, page 156.

#### WORSHIP THROUGH LIVING

It has been said that one learns through worship, comes to fresh insight, and new understanding of God's purposes. But insight and understanding are not things. They may not be cherished for their own sake. They are important only as they enter into life and make a difference in the manner in which ones lives his life.

Moreover, the growth of insight and understanding seems

clearly to be dependent upon using them. One rarely gets the complete answer to a perplexing problem all at once. There is a ray of light here and another there. As one uses light that has come, more comes. As one acts in accordance with the insight gained, larger insight comes. This is the unmistakable testimony of Christians through the ages.

In helping children to worship, it is important to help them to know that their worship and their lives are not separate, but are one. "Not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service," we worship God. And so they may come to know that they learn to do the will of God by doing it. A service of worship, materials from the hymnal, the sacraments, the liturgy of the church, the Bible, all help. But the worship of God that stops there is not worship in the Christian sense. In deeds of love and mercy we make our prayer, "Thy kingdom come." In kindness to the stranger, in friendliness to the distressed, we make our prayer, "Let us love one another."

There has been in recent years a tendency to feel that man is able to do all that needs to be done to make the world beautiful and fruitful and good, that he does not need to depend upon God. That view of the sufficiency of man has led humanity into dangerous ways, ways so dangerous that even the most stouthearted of the sons of man are now realizing that man is not sufficient. The inspiration and help which come from God himself are the only resources upon which man may rely. Through the worship of God, men come to know the will of God, to understand the purposes of God, to have insight into their brothers' needs. Only through the worship of God will they find the comfort they need to enable them to meet the difficulties and disappointments of life without disaster; the courage they need to face and attack these difficulties. Only through worship will they find themselves to be children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

## CHAPTER VIII

# *Using Prepared Lesson Materials*

TO THE GREAT MAJORITY OF CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS, LESSON materials are essential and gratefully received aids in teaching children the Christian religion. The selection and use of this material is, therefore, of great importance in determining the quality of the teaching done in the home and in the church.

During the past twenty years, there has been much thought and attention given to the curriculum of religious education. Studies have been made, tests have been applied, conferences have been held, experimental centers for testing various types of curriculum have been set up. This activity in the curriculum of religious education has paralleled the concern about curriculum in the field of general education, and the work done in general education has been useful to religious education. The studies of how learning takes place, of ways to use subject matter most fruitfully, of the results which come from using each of several possible teaching methods, of how the learning of ideas and subject matter influences conduct, and the like, all have given to religious education a body of useful data and experience for remaking its own curriculum materials.

### WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM?

The curriculum in any church school group is more than the piece of printed lesson material provided for that age group by the denominational agency responsible for preparing it. It includes the purposes, the activities and all the materials which may be used—the pictures, hymn books,

illustrations from present-day experience of the pupils, trips, the contributions of persons asked to meet with the group, the environment in which learning takes place. Within the whole curriculum the lesson materials are the specific materials provided for a specific class.

It is clear, then, that no good teacher will depend upon the lesson materials provided as the entire curriculum for his class. But it is clear also that these lesson materials offer the most carefully planned and thorough-going guidance available to the teachers. Some churches which are able to secure and employ skillful professional leadership for their children may develop excellent programs particularly suited to the needs of their own children. They may not depend very largely upon the denominational materials. But such churches are rare. There are only a few churches in any denomination with adequate leadership to create such individual programs. Lesson materials are not, therefore, lightly to be set aside in favor of some theory of the curriculum which frowns upon any planned materials, or in favor of some "special" material which is urged upon the church school by some agency other than its officially responsible board or committee.

#### TESTS TO BE APPLIED TO LESSON MATERIALS

Lesson materials, no matter how well prepared, are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. Teachers do not seek to "teach the lesson," they seek to teach the child. The value of the lesson material, then, is determined in the light of how much its use helps the teacher and the child grow in the direction of the purposes of Christian education.

#### Meeting the Needs of Children

It is important that these materials seem to the child himself to be useful. If he sees a reason for learning a passage from the Bible, if he knows why he is studying the life



of Paul, if he feels need for the help offered on settling disputes, if he wishes to know rules for taking turns or sharing or fair play, if he realizes that he needs to pray and wishes to learn how—if the child himself is ready for what is being taught, he will learn it quickly, and will be able to use it without laborious “applications” on the part of the teachers. Because this law of readiness is one of the important laws of all learning, the present-day lesson materials in Christian education seek to use it.

The converse of this law is true. If the child is not ready for the material it will be difficult for him to learn it, and he will not be likely to find it useful in Christian growth. The idea that children can “store up” knowledge for future use is discredited. Knowledge does not seem to “store” well unless it is used. And when it is used it attracts other knowledge to itself, and so grows from more to more. Whether this knowledge is knowledge of Bible verses or of church doctrine or of rules of everyday Christian living, the only way to keep it alive is to use it. If it is used, and if there is satisfaction in using it, if it really helps, then it becomes a permanent possession, a part of the child’s own self.

### **Interpreting the Christian Faith**

But the present interest and the recognized need of the children are not the only tests which must be applied to lesson materials. There is the second test: “Do they help the child to understand the purposes of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and to commit himself to the doing of the will of God?”

It is not always clear to a child that he needs to learn what he does need to learn. In school, he often fails to feel any great enthusiasm for learning to add. And so the school teacher seeks to show him that he needs to know how to add. In religious education, the child also requires to be shown that he needs knowledge and understanding. In many areas, the lesson materials may not wait upon the child’s interest.

They must call to the child, attract his attention, point out to him something that he needs, but does not know he needs.

Suppose the fifth grade children have not thought much about the importance of standing for the right when it is hard. They are not eager for any help on this problem. Nevertheless it has been found that this is, almost universally, a problem for fifth graders. And so the lesson material suggests the story of Nehemiah building the wall of Jerusalem, refusing to give up or be discouraged or turned aside by difficulties. This story is used to call attention to the problem, to suggest it to the boys and girls.

A special demand which is laid upon the lesson materials in Christian education is that they help the child to know the specific content of the Bible and of Christian doctrine. At the risk of repetition, some specific suggestions seem needed. For present-day boys and girls do not know the content of the Bible and of Christian doctrine as well as they should know these resources.

This does not mean that lesson materials will return to catechetical form and drill children on Bible memory work and on correct answers to questions of doctrine. Rather it means that the lesson materials will seek increasingly effective means of teaching the child to find in the Bible help in understanding the purposes of God. They will recognize that mere knowledge, even knowledge of the Bible and of Christian doctrine, will not save a child from sin, nor make him a useful member of society. And so they will suggest ways of studying the Bible which will have meaning for his own life in the here and now. And they will help the child to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him.

In order that the Bible may have meaning to the growing child, he will need to know something about how the Bible came to be, how it has been preserved through the ages, how it came through the minds and hearts of many different human personalities in many different countries and in

many different ages. He will need to know how to read the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, how to interpret oriental manners and customs and so to understand the meaning of the text.

He will need to know what the Bible tells of God's dealings with men, how God helps men, how he depends upon men, what he expects of men. He will need to know the lives of the great characters of the Bible, how they responded to God, how they helped their fellows. Above all he will need to know what the Bible tells about the life and teachings of Jesus, how he influenced those who came to know him, how the fellowship of his followers became the Christian Church through which his teachings have been preserved and interpreted to succeeding generations.

In other words, if the Bible is to be meaningful to the growing child, he must know what the Bible says. And if the child is to be an intelligent, working Christian, he must know the meaning of the faith he professes. He cannot learn all at once what the Bible says and the whole body of Christian doctrine. Neither can he learn if the teacher fails to remember that the developing mental capacities of the child must be respected in teaching these matters as in teaching all things.

If lesson materials can, at once, appeal to the present experience and interest of the child for whom they are intended, and also be true to the essential goals of Christian education, then they will be genuinely useful in the life of the child. If they are so overloaded with material remote from the present experiences and interest of the children that they are dull and heavy, or if they are so much ahead of the child's present abilities and aspirations that they are depressing and discouraging, they will not be useful, no matter how sound in the faith they may be. On the other hand, if they are lacking in attention to the basic Christian faith, no matter how interesting they may be, they will not merit the confidence of teachers and parents.

## ADAPTING LESSON MATERIALS

As has been suggested, the lesson materials are based upon careful studies of the needs of boys and girls, and so they are likely to deal with the needs of any particular group of boys and girls. In some cases these needs may not be felt needs, but will require lifting up and being brought to attention. On the other hand, in some cases the particular needs of a given group at a given time are so striking and so important that the leader will have to set aside the lesson material for a few weeks to deal directly with the actual problems he faces with his children.

In one church the mother of one of the boys in the fourth grade class was struck by a drunken driver and killed. The other boys in the class all knew her as one of the friendliest, most helpful teachers in the primary department from which they had just been promoted. They were deeply shocked by the tragedy, and could not understand how such things could be in a world in which God loves his children. The lesson material at the time was dealing with Bible heroes. The teacher was confronted on Sunday morning with questions and confusions on the part of her boys which could not be met by the materials at hand. And so she set aside the lesson materials for three weeks, and asked the pastor of the church to meet with the boys and help them face the tremendously difficult problem of disaster and love of God.

In a kindergarten group, the lesson materials suggested for the spring quarter centered around the love of God in the beauties of the springtime world. In a church in northern Wisconsin the springtime world had not been revealed! There was unusually heavy snow, very cold weather, delayed planting. The teacher wisely planned other material for these weeks so that the expressions of joy in the budding trees, blossoming flowers, and springtime breezes suggested in the materials might be used when they were appropriate.

The teacher may have to make other adjustments in the material. In one lesson course, written for juniors, the materials on friendly relations with those who are different used as illustrations of "different" children, Italian boys and girls. The juniors of a church in a southern town had known only one Italian, the son of the owner of a large produce business, a boy whom they all felt was very much "one of them." But in their town there was a real sense of difference between the Negro and the white children. The teacher slavishly followed the lesson material, suggested all the virtues of the Italians of which the material gave examples, and felt sure that her pupils had come to love Italians as children of their common Father. It just did not occur to her to seek to realize the purpose of the lesson material through more meaningful illustrations.

It is not possible that lesson materials prepared by a central agency of a denomination which has churches scattered over a large geographical area and ministering to children in many different types of communities, will be perfectly adapted to all the conditions in all the churches at all times. Adjustments must be made to meet differing needs. There is, then, a real sense in which each teacher must make his own lesson materials.

Because the teachers and the parents of the boys and girls do have so important a part to play in determining whether or not the lesson materials provided will be useful, it is their responsibility and opportunity to cooperate with those responsible for making the materials. Suggestions based on experience in using the materials and suggestions of ways in which the parent or teacher thinks the material may be improved for his children are helpful and are welcomed. Those who plan and write materials cannot see all the conditions of all the churches for which they are writing. They need help from those who use the material. And such cooperation will result in increasingly helpful lessons for the boys and girls of the churches.



## CHAPTER IX

### *The Teacher and the Church School Group*

THE GREAT TEACHER AND FRIEND OF CHILDREN, ANGELO PATRI, says, "A great deal of the teaching that is done in schools is the teaching of subject matter alone. The idea is to have eighty to ninety per cent of a class able to work the examples, recite the dates, write the themes, sit correctly.

"Teaching subject matter while ignoring the child who has to master it is not the real function of education. Unless our teaching touches the spirit of the child, the real child, and causes him to look at life with the eyes of a spiritual being, we are doing our country a disservice. We are sending out material-minded citizens."

If this statement is true of teaching reading and history and geography, how much more true it is of teaching religion.

#### PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TEACHING

If the teacher is too intent upon having the children learn to repeat the words of a prayer or a Bible verse, he may become tense in manner, impatient in speech, unlovely in facial expression. To all of this, the child responds, and from all this, he learns. He may be able to repeat the words of the prayer or the Bible verse, but he will not have learned to pray or to find joy and comfort and inspiration from the Bible. Instead, he may have learned to dislike prayer and to be unhappy at the mention of the Bible.

The boys and girls in the junior department were studying a carefully planned unit, "Jesus and His Disciples." The purpose of the unit was to help the boys and girls

understand how Jesus changed his disciples by his love and confidence and the inspiration of his companionship. But the teacher was unloving, uninspiring, and indicated by her manner that she expected the worst rather than the best of her pupils. She was a "good disciplinarian," and so the boys and girls were quiet as she expounded, and then drilled them carefully, on the facts presented in the lesson material. She taught them the facts. But she failed to re-create, in the church school group of leader and learners, the joys of Christian fellowship which were so abundantly evident in the incidents which the lesson materials recalled.

If one would help a child to reach his full development, one must like him. Liking him is something other than loving him. One must love him, too, in the sense of realizing his importance and wishing to help him. But to like him means to enjoy him, to find sincere pleasure in being with him, to be able to laugh at his jokes, to have fun with his games, to understand his taste in books—even the comics! If a person has this feeling toward a child, the chances are all on the side of his being a good teacher. For really good teaching methods are rooted in the child's own point of view. The teacher who is inside that point of view finds that sound methods come readily.

The alert teacher will, therefore, be acquainted with the school and community and home life of his pupils to the fullest extent possible. He will know that the on-going life of each pupil from day to day throughout the week must be his concern if he is to teach the child when he comes to church. For these day by day experiences of his week make the child what he is when he comes to church.

The teacher knows, too, that no church program can do everything for a child which must be done to further his religious growth. There are some learnings that are very helpful in spiritual development which may take place in school or in a Cub Scout or Brownie or 4H Club group. There are some experiences which the child needs for his

Christian growth which may normally take place on the public playground rather than at church. And the home of the child is more influential than is any other social institution. The teacher who likes his pupils will wish to know what they do during the week, and to be acquainted with their other community leaders, their parents, and the groups and organizations in which they study and play.

In the church school there must be organization, a plan of grouping the pupils, the choice of teaching procedures, arrangements about rooms and equipment, the planning of worship services, the selection and use of curriculum materials, and through all these, a sense of purpose, of direction, of goals to be realized. But without the personality of the teacher, and the personal relationships between the teacher and his pupils, all the rest is likely to fall of its own weight. It is the teacher believing in the child, understanding the child in all his relationships, who holds the program together and translates it into a living, vital experience for the boys and girls. To find these teachers is a primary job of every church in planning for the Christian nurture of children. Having found such a person, a church is under obligation to put into his hands all useful tools and equipment, all helpful books and the best lesson materials available. And the church is under obligation to surround such a person with the whole-hearted support of the entire congregation.

#### GROUP TEACHING

The question may be raised, "Is it possible to teach so personal a matter as religion in any sort of grouping? Is this not a matter for individual teaching?" There are some experiences which children have which require individual help. The boy, mentioned in a previous chapter, whose parents were on the verge of divorce, is a case in point. That problem could not be discussed helpfully in a group. And so teachers who are really alert to the needs of the boys

and girls will be sensitive to situations which call for individual counsel and individual prayer. There are times of special decision and commitment which call for individual counsel on the part of the leaders.

Just when a child is ready for these high moments in his religious growth cannot be charted by a time table. The leaders must be prepared to give individual encouragement, help and support at the moment it is needed, whether the class as a whole is ready for it or not.

There is, then, a sense in which individual teaching is necessary in the child's religious growth. But there also is a sense in which group fellowship is of the essence of Christian growth. We have considered some of the learning that takes place through fellowship with parents and teachers, with ministers and other officials of the church, and with other boys and girls. In more specific ways, being a member of a group may aid learning.

If one boy has a real interest in birds, he can interest a number of other boys in birds. His enthusiasm is contagious. In a church group, also, boys and girls learn from one another. If there is a friendly spirit in the group, the pupils will support one another in learning. It is easier to learn together important facts about the Bible, about the geography of the Holy Land, about the great characters of the Bible. It is good to plan together just how, in specific ways, the example of Jesus in showing kindness to strangers, to unpopular people, and to the hungry and the sick, can be carried out by present-day Christians. It is helpful to work together on a worship service, to find just the right hymn, just the right Bible reading, which will help express the aspirations of a group.

It is true that the spiritual needs and yearnings of no two persons are ever the same. It is true that no two seven-year-old boys will ever be at exactly the same point in their religious growth. Yet it is true also that boys and girls do help one another as together they study and worship and

plan for others. Children learn through fellowship because in a fellowship there is opportunity to practice the Christian way.

### THE TEACHER'S PREPARATION FOR MEETING A GROUP

What has been said about the advantages of group learning depends upon the teacher. Unless there is preparation for teaching, many undesirable learnings may take place, and few if any desirable learnings. The boys and girls may learn that church school is a waste of time. An alert six-year-old who had been in day school about six months announced to his parents that he was not going to church school any more. "Because," he explained, "you don't learn anything there." His experience in a good first grade had given him standards of procedure in a school, and he was irritated by the slipshod carelessness in the church school. That child was learning that church school was not important, while day school was important. If there is disorder during worship, the child is learning irreverence; if there is nervous, last minute "make-ready" on the part of the leader, the child is learning carelessness in his religious activities.

Because present-day teaching places large emphasis upon the interests of the child, some teachers have come to the conclusion that planning in advance for a session is not important. That pupil-interest alone should determine the class procedure and the selection of materials to be used is an extreme view followed by a few day schools. But most progressive schools today have clearly defined goals for each grade and require certain learnings from the child each year, whether he shows any great enthusiasm for them or not. They know he has to learn to read and write and to use numbers if he is going to live in the world, and so they see to it that he learns these skills.

But there are various ways of approaching the business of teaching him. One may simply set before the child the



subject matter and say, "This must be learned." Or one may depend upon the interests of the child, his readiness for certain new materials or skills, to open the way for his eager seeking of the materials and skills. To be learning something because one is told he must, and to be learning something because one wants to learn it, are two very different operations.

The teacher's preparation for meeting the group will take account, then, first of all of the children in that group. He will think of them, one by one. He will look over the notes taken of the special interests, the questions, the failures to cooperate, of each child. He will know that the success or the failure of his teaching in general, and his teaching in the coming session in particular, will depend, first of all, upon how well he understands his pupils, how well he senses their needs, their interests.

The second important matter for the teacher to consider in his preparation is the over-all purpose of his teaching. What does he hope to accomplish by meeting his boys and girls? On these two bases rests sound preparation for teaching.

### Planning for a Unit of Work

The teacher may take such steps as these in preliminary long-term planning for his group.

First, considering the needs and interests of the pupils, and the general purposes of Christian education, *the teacher may set up more specific purposes for the weeks or months immediately ahead.* In setting up such purposes, the teacher need not start from scratch. In a normal local church situation, the teacher has a curriculum. In a few situations it is a curriculum prepared by that particular local church for that particular group of children. More often, it is a curriculum prepared by the educational agency of the denomination.

As he plans for a unit of work and study, the leader will

acquaint himself thoroughly with the curriculum. He will consult with the other teachers in his church. He will think about the unit to be used in the light of the needs of his own group as he has come to know these needs, and then write out just what he hopes his pupils will learn during the study of this unit.

Second, *the teacher will plan how he can help his pupils to want to study this unit.* This is not to be considered as thinking up tricks to put something over on the child, and try to make him feel that he thought it up for himself. It is honest planning to attract the child's attention, to stimulate his interest in a certain direction. The child is not always geared up to go in one special direction. More often, in fact, he is ready to be guided. He wants to do something; just what, he is often willing to have suggested to him. And if it is a well-chosen type of activity directed toward a well-chosen goal, he will pursue it with satisfaction. The teacher, then, will seek to find ways to direct the attention of the pupils. He may suggest the new unit by pictures and books and objects which will be available as soon as the children gather.

If the group is made up of younger children, a unit on "God's Care" may be suggested by having a mother hen and some baby chickens in the room. Or, if this is not practicable, a picture may be used. The interest of the children in the way the babies are kept warm and protected by the mother hen can make them ready and eager to talk about God's care in nature and in human life.

If the group is made up of older boys and girls, a unit on "The Life of Paul" may be suggested by a picture map of the Mediterranean region, some books containing interesting pictures, such as Genevieve Foster's *Augustus Caesar's World*, some teaching pictures or reproductions of the early writing materials which were used in preparing the Epistles, a picture or model of a first century sailing vessel, and, for a touch of the savage, a "scourge of thongs,"

such as those with which Paul was several times beaten.

Third, *the leader will consider what methods and procedures are likely to be most useful in helping the boys and girls learn.* The leader will know that he will meet his group, most of the time, in a certain place. This place may limit what can be planned. If it is a crowded room, certain types of learning activities cannot be carried out without disturbing other groups.

With his own group before his thinking, with the particular purposes for the unit stated, and with the place in which the group is to meet in mind, the leader will think about detailed plans and methods and procedures. Will trips or discussions or talks by especially qualified persons promote learning? Will story-telling or a dramatization or the use of art or manual activities be helpful? Will memorization or drill be useful? Some types of procedures are better suited to some units, and others, to other units. If the group is studying the Prophets, a walk in the woods is not likely to be the most illuminating method of study; if the unit is "God, the Creator," a walk in the woods may be a very fruitful learning activity.

Along with considering methods and procedures for the unit, the leader will think about the materials needed. In addition to the help available in the teacher's helps and the pupil's materials, he will wish to collect material from other sources. There may be need for books from the library, pictures from the departmental file, some factual information from the president of the woman's society about present-day work in a mission station, some seed from the florist, some maps or globes, or some help from the minister on a theological question which the teacher feels beyond his depth.

### Planning for a Session

Following this general planning for a unit there will come session-by-session planning. The leader will consider

the schedule for the session. What will likely be done first? In other words, what will be a good "beginning"? He will know that the session really begins when the first child arrives, whatever the time may be. And so for these early arrivals there will be plans for immediate activity. Whatever is done will be a part of the session, not "busy work" to keep the children out of mischief, but something which promotes learning toward the purpose of the unit.

If materials are to be gathered, the early comers may help collect them. If there is to be some special arrangement of the room, they may help. They may arrange flowers. They may look up information. They may begin to make plans for future activities.

As the session gets underway, what is likely to happen next? Then what? And so on through the period. There is a limited amount of time available. How will this time be used? What is essential and what may be omitted? Will there be time for all that has been planned for the pupils to do? If the leader is a beginning teacher, it may be useful to make out a time schedule, indicating just what portion of the session can be most helpfully used for each of the plans made.

Then the teacher may ask himself if the time has been too tightly filled with teacher-plans to allow pupil-plans to emerge. Will it be better to take it more easily? To allow more free time so that the pupils may think and plan?

With the plans revised and materials made available, the teacher may relax. He will think of himself for a while. He will remember that, after all, the plans will not help the pupils unless he himself is alert and eager and confident of God's presence. And so he will not drive himself too hard. He has done his best to be ready for the group. Now, he will leave the result with God. He will ask him for help. Then he will rest or play or go to sleep.

## Meeting the Boys and Girls

The test of the teacher's planning comes when he meets the group of boys and girls. If there has been careful planning so that he feels sure of himself, the teacher is in a far better position to follow the leads of the pupils as these indicate special needs and interests. His own plan gives him confidence. In this confidence, he may change the plan or discard it altogether without dismay.

If the meeting comes at the beginning of a proposed new unit of work and study, the special preparation the leader has made for directing attention to that study will be evident. The boys and girls will see what is before them. They will handle the materials. They will ask questions. The leader may suggest the proposed study, telling enough about it to arouse curiosity and interest.

If it is a group for whom a study of the life of Paul is proposed, the teacher may ask what they think it is important to find out about a great man in order to know why he was great. What would they like to know about Paul? The teacher may write on the blackboard or in a class book the questions the pupils raise. He may comment as the questions are raised and so suggest additional questions. Perhaps they wish to know what sort of school Paul attended; where he lived, where he travelled; what he wanted most of all to do; whether he had a hard time or an easy time; who were his friends and who were his enemies; what he considered important; for what he is remembered.

Such a list of questions represents the pupils' goal: what they wish to learn. If they really wish to learn the answers to their questions, they are off to a good start on their learning. If the questions have been forced upon them, and they have no real interest in Paul, they are off to a poor start.

Next, the boys and girls may plan how they can find the answers to their questions. If the subject is a study of the



life of Paul, their questions are not likely to be the sort of questions which can be answered by the pupils themselves. Discussion will not help, because nobody in the group is likely to have adequate information. They will have to get help from books. But they have some important source material easily available. They have their Bibles and their lesson materials. They can begin with these. But they are likely to raise some questions for which they will need additional material. Where can they get it? Such planning may lead to fruitful study.

If the unit proposed for study is in the field of human relations of the present day, such as, "How to Settle Disputes," boys and girls will first of all wish to tell their own experiences and discuss their own ideas. They have disputes. They know something about them. And so they should contribute their own ideas. But as they discuss, they will realize, after a while, that they have not really learned how to settle disputes. They need more light on the question. Who can help them? Is there any person who knows more about it than they do? Perhaps someone in the group, either the teacher or one of the pupils, knows about some new material. In this type of study new problems and new materials are to be considered each year or each month.

This step in learning is very important. If the boys and girls themselves raise questions, explore them, and come to see that they need more light than they themselves have, the search for and the use of this new light will be exciting and vital. And what they learn, they are likely to remember. At the close of the class session, the teacher and pupils will check over what has been done, and what has been planned, and set detailed goals for the next session.

As the study of the unit comes to completion, the pupils will review the questions they set for themselves at the beginning and see if they have found satisfactory answers. They will check over what they have learned and come to some conclusions about their study. The teacher will refer

to his own set of purposes for the unit and check them against what seems to have been accomplished.

### SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES

Along with the general methods and procedures which the leader will use to further learning, there are specific techniques which will be useful.

#### Asking Questions

Because persons ask many questions each day in the ordinary associations with their fellows, teachers assume that asking questions is easy. As a matter of fact, it requires real skill to ask a question so that the pupil knows what information is requested, so that the question itself does not suggest the answer, and so that it causes the child to think. For example, "Where do you think Paul wanted to go after he left Ephesus?" is a poor question because there are no data which give the child any clue to Paul's wishes in this matter. The child's opinion would not be significant.

Questions which ask for opinions should be so stated, and should rest on adequate data. For example, after the facts are established, one might ask, "When he was in Jericho, why do you think Jesus decided to go to Zacchaeus' house?" The answer to this question is not specifically stated, but the story gives clues. There are also other clues in the personality of Jesus himself. If the boys and girls have come to know something of Jesus' basic attitude toward persons, and if they know the details of this specific story, they should be able to formulate a reasonable answer. It will be an opinion answer, not a factual answer.

When asking opinion questions, any serious answer should be received with respect, even though it does not coincide with the leader's opinion. On opinion questions, there may be room for several different answers, all of which are reasonable. "What do you think the Golden Rule suggests that we do in this matter?" may bring forth answers which

will startle the leader, and yet all be perfectly sincere. The pupils' answers may reveal to the teacher the points at which additional teaching is needed.

When it is factual information that is called for, there should be no provision for "opinion." Factual questions should be simply stated. The question above about Paul's departure from Ephesus should be framed without clutter. "Where did Paul go when he left Ephesus?" The answer to that question is contained in the record.

Questions which invite the pupils to express a preference should not be asked until the leader has considered the probable answers and is prepared for them. If he asks, "Would you like to memorize this Psalm?" he should not be thrown off base if the child answers frankly, "No, I would not." If the matter is not one which may be left to the pupil's choice, then no such question should be asked.

It is wise, too, not to direct a question to a specific child in a group by mentioning his name first. For example, "Harry, why was Amos ordered to leave Bethel?" relieves all the other boys and girls of the responsibility for thinking. Ask the question, let there be time for it to register, and then call upon someone to answer.

To ask questions in rapid fire order is helpful only in the case of drill questions. Questions which call for thoughtful answers should not be hurled at the pupils, one after another, nor should they be repeated in a different form immediately. "Why did Daniel refuse to eat the king's food? Why do you think he asked for pulse and water rather than meat and wine? Why did he ask the steward to let him have this diet?" This piling up of questions, each injecting a slightly different approach, throws the pupil into confusion. Having framed the question as carefully as possible, let it stand until the pupil has had an opportunity to get it clearly into his thinking. Then if he seems puzzled, if there seems to be something about it which is not clear,

the leader may say, "Perhaps I did not ask the question clearly. Let's try again."

### **Routines and Variety**

There are some parts of sessions with children which should be reduced to routine as quickly as possible. For example, if the first grade is to move from a class room to the chapel at fairly regular intervals, a set procedure for this move will save time, eliminate confusion, and save energy and planning for more important matters. Talk the matter over with the boys and girls, explain whatever they need to know about the reasons for the moving and the reasons for moving quickly and without undue noise, and then set the order of the moving. Thereafter, no discussion of this routine should be necessary. When the time comes to move, the established procedure automatically goes into effect.

On the other hand, it is unwise to allow the entire session to become routinized. This leads to boredom. Change the order of events, the manner in which a song is taught, the way the room is arranged, to introduce surprises. Even in the midst of an activity, if interest is waning and the going seems too tedious, say, "We have done this long enough. Let's put it aside for awhile and do something else." If the activity is really worthwhile, and has simply bogged down temporarily because of too long concentration upon it, the chances are that after they are refreshed by change, the pupils will come back to it and finish it. Sometimes activities should be frankly pronounced unprofitable and abandoned.

### **Relating New Experience and Knowledge to Old**

Whatever it is that the boys and girls are learning, they will make better progress if they see it in relation to something familiar. Suppose a sixth grade is studying the story of the Bible, how it was preserved through the ages, how it

was translated into the language of the peoples. To approach such a study cold is to encounter resistance. It seems formidable, difficult. Instead, it may be approached through what the pupil already knows, the Bible which he himself uses, in which he knows how to find passages. There may be introduced modern Bibles in other languages which the pupils will examine with interest. Familiar passages may be found in the foreign language Bibles. Consideration of the number of languages into which the Bible has been translated, with accurate information to answer questions, may get before the boys and girls the fact that the Bible has been translated, and the meaning of translation.

"Here are several Bibles in different languages, but they all say the same thing. The Bible was not written in any of these languages. These are all translations. Since they say the same thing, they must be translations of the same text."

Some such setting of the proposed study into a familiar framework may call forth such questions as: "Where did that first text come from? In what language was it written? Who wrote it? When was it written? Where is it now?" And the search for new knowledge will be begun.

With younger children, one may recall familiar experience on a simpler plane. "Tom and Mary and Helen and John and lots of us can skip at the same time. Let's all skip. Our room is nice and big. Lots of children can skip at the same time." After a skip, a drink is in order. Gathering the children about her the leader may say, "Yes, lots of us can skip at the same time. But here is something different. How many of us can get a drink at the bubbler at the same time?" And so the children begin to understand why taking turns is necessary for happiness in some activities.

### Memorizing

There was a time when those who wished to teach religion to children depended very largely upon memorizing set answers to set questions, and upon memorizing passages



from the Bible. That time has passed in most churches and families. It is generally recognized that saying words, no matter how significant the words may be, is not a guarantee that boys and girls will understand and use the words to their profit. Sometimes, indeed, the forced memorization of a passage may be definitely unprofitable.

In a junior class, the memory verse assigned was "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." One bright boy rattled off the verse. As a slow boy was struggling with the words, the bright boy made disturbing efforts to "prompt," laughed, and was as annoying as he could be. Finally, with a great effort, the slow boy came through with the verse: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." He breathed a sigh of relief. Then he turned toward his tormentor and hissed, "And as soon as I get you out of this church I'm going to knock your block off." Evidently the verse had not taken hold of experience in the way the teacher had hoped!

But there is an important place for memorizing suitable materials in the present-day program of religious education for primary and junior boys and girls. If the materials are well selected for memorization and if they are brought to the attention of the boys and girls in a way to cause them to appreciate and like the materials, there will be not only profit but also joy in learning them.

In a junior department the leader felt that Psalms 121 would be helpful material to use in worship services. The faith it expressed was a faith which she hoped her boys and girls would be able to achieve, and the wording was beautiful and the setting dramatic.

Instead of announcing it as a "memory Psalm," she introduced it by telling the story of one of the antiphonal Psalms. The experience of the pilgrims on their way to worship in Jerusalem was related, stressing the heat of the sun by day and the danger of wild animals at night. The psalm was referred to as an expression of the care of God along

the way, the joy of the pilgrims as they came to the end of their wearisome journey, and their sense of security in the thought of their God. Then she had the psalm read antiphonally by two groups of teachers (previously prepared), one group taking the part of the leader and the other taking the part of the pilgrims. As the boys and girls listened, the dramatic as well as the devotional quality of the verses became clear. Then the boys and girls found the psalm in their Bibles and read it responsively with the leader. They talked about the several expressions of faith, and then, as they re-read it, they seemed to put themselves in the place of the pilgrims of old, reading with spirit and feeling the final expression of confidence in God.

There was no more effort to teach the psalm that day. The next Sunday, the experience was recalled, and the psalm read antiphonally once more. Then the leader suggested that the boys and girls try giving the responses without looking at their Bibles. They were surprised to find that they could!

Thereafter, the parts were shifted, one group after another taking the part of the leader until all had read each part. One Sunday, a few weeks later, the psalm was introduced in the worship service, and the boys and girls could repeat it without looking at the words. They had memorized it by using it in its proper setting, they had enjoyed it, they had come to appreciate it, they had found in it a beautiful and meaningful language of worship.

Bible passages, hymns, prayers and litanies which we wish to be used for devotional purposes should be learned in a manner which prepares the children for using them in this way. Boreome, mechanical drill on words will detract from the value of the material in the lives of the boys and girls. And having memorized a passage, they should be given opportunity to use it again and again in the study and worship of the group. It may then reasonably be expected to become a permanent possession to be re-

called in private devotions, in moments of joy or sorrow or temptation throughout life.

There are certain factual materials which may be learned by drill. The physical make-up of the Bible, for example, the number of testaments, the number of books in each, may be learned by drill. The names of the countries in which the denomination has mission stations, the names of the churches in one's community may be quickly and efficiently learned by drill.

### **Making Assignments**

One of the greatest handicaps of Sunday church school teaching is the interval which often elapses between sessions. The vacation church school has the great advantage of meeting every day. The Sunday sessions, though they are sometimes supplemented by weekday meetings, and the sessions of the weekday church school, are often a full week apart. Children do not carry over plans and ideas for a full week without some assistance.

At the end of a session the leader may take a few moments to help the boys and girls gather up the experiences and learnings of that session, to see just where they are in relation to the plans they made, and to work out ways of carrying on their study. If pupils are to do individual work during the interim of the class sessions, the exact assignment each is to be asked to accept should be stated very clearly. It should be an assignment which grows directly out of the work underway, so that there is no question in the mind of the pupil about why he is to do it. He is to do it because that particular piece of work or bit of information is necessary for the next step. It should be clear to him how he is to go about carrying out the assignment. If he is to ask the minister to bring to the class next Sunday a book from his library, the pupil should know where to find the minister at a given time and should be able to tell him just what help the class

needs from him. If he is to learn a psalm for a worship service or a dramatization, he should know just which psalm, where to find it, and how it is to be used in the service.

If two or more of the pupils are to go together to interview a community official, they should know exactly what it is they wish to find out from him, and should make specific plans for getting together. If the group as a whole is to meet during the week for some further study or investigation, the detailed plans should be entirely clear.

Too often the assignments are vague and not made to specific persons. "Now suppose we all think about this during the week and see if we can find out something more about it by next Sunday." If anybody thinks about so vague an interest as that it will be a marvel!

#### RECOGNIZING THAT FAILURES WILL COME

Because the teacher is human, he will make mistakes. He will misunderstand his pupils. He will misinterpret the Bible. He will fail to know aright the will of God. But because he is a Christian, he will know that God will help him to overcome the limitations. As he does his best, week by week and year by year, he will grow more sensitive to the needs of his pupils so that he misunderstands them less frequently. As he studies year by year, he will come increasingly to know the Bible and to be able to interpret it aright. As he seeks fellowship with God, he will come more and more to understand the language in which he speaks, and become more and more atune to his will. And so as he teaches his pupils, feeling himself a worker together with God, he will, himself, grow in wisdom and in understanding and in dedication to the will of God.

The growing teacher will know that his pupils, too, will make mistakes. He will know that they will fail often to know what they should do, and that they will fail more often to do what they know they should do. He will not

expect too much of them any more than he will expect too much of himself. He will be patient with them as he prays God to be patient with him.

And he will never despair of them. He will recall, in his moments of discouragement about a particular child, that it is not the will of God that one of his little ones should perish. And so he will continue to love even the unlovable ones, and to like the most obstreperous boy in the lot!

Through all his efforts and his failures and his earnest seeking of the will of God, he will keep a sense of humor. He will be able to laugh at himself; he will be able to laugh with his pupils. When the session seems utterly wasted, the pupils uncooperative, nothing learned, no purpose achieved, he will not give up in despair. Before the session ends, he will try to find something that he and the boys and girls can agree upon; something that will give them a sense of togetherness before they separate. His sense of humor may save the day. If, without being tragic, he can acknowledge that the session has seemed unprofitable and laugh at himself for something he has done amiss, there may be something saved: the pupil's affection for the teacher! Upon that he can build next time.



## CHAPTER X

### *Evaluating the Results of Teaching*

"I FEEL SO DISCOURAGED," A TEACHER REMARKED AFTER A PARTICULARLY trying session with a group of boys and girls in the church school. "They just are not learning anything."

This often is the feeling of a teacher, a parent, or a minister. There are many meetings with groups and many experiences of living with individual boys and girls which seem to be complete failures so far as learning on the part of the children is concerned. Generally speaking, however, the boys and girls have learned something. Often, it is true, they have not learned just what the teacher set out to teach them.

Perhaps she set out to teach them the Ten Commandments and found that they could not repeat one commandment correctly. But perhaps, all unknown to the teacher, other learnings were taking place. Perhaps the boys and girls were learning through associations with the teacher that patience and kindness and good humor under difficulties are helpful attitudes for a human being to show toward others. Perhaps they were learning that devotion to duty in spite of obstacles is admirable. On the other hand, perhaps they were learning that religious education is boring, or that teachers of religion are self-righteous, unfriendly persons. It rarely happens that the boys and girls learn nothing.

The fact that the learnings taking place on the side-lines are so important in religious growth makes it very difficult to know what the results of teaching actually have been in the life of any child. He goes to church school regularly,

he learns the information that is set out for him to learn, he participates in the activities, he seems to respond to the worship services. Yet with it all he seems to be self-centered, insensitive to human need, unaware of the purposes of God and unconcerned about them. On the other hand, a child who is a source of constant interruption in the well-laid plans of the teacher, who seems unresponsive to all the teaching that is going on in the church school program, may somehow learn a great deal about the law of love in human relationships, and about the will of God for man.

Recognizing, then, that it is difficult to measure or evaluate the results of teaching in the field of religion, it is important that the leader use some sort of means of checking up on his work and of finding the points of strength and the points of weakness in it.

#### USING INFORMATION TESTS

Almost all persons in America today are familiar with the "true-false" technique of finding out what a person knows within a given narrow field. There are scores of programs on the radio which use this technique, often with fabulous rewards to the one who gets the "right answer"!

#### Testing Information

As a result of listening to the radio, a great many persons know also how easy it is to guess the right answer in such a test, and how inconsequential it is whether one knows the right answer or not. Yet one does find, in listening to such quiz shows, that it is interesting to match one's wits with others, and to find out how many "rights" one has scored.

In many school subjects, various tests are given to find out what information the pupils have acquired. In history, statements are made about great characters, about dates, about laws, and the pupils are asked to mark each statement "true" or "false." Or a question is asked, several

possible answers are proposed, and the pupils are asked to select the answer which is correct. Or a statement is begun and left unfinished, and the pupil is asked to finish the statement so that what it says is correct. Such informational tests may be used in religious education to find out what the children have learned about the incidents in the lives of Bible characters, the chronology of events in biblical history, facts about church history and church doctrine.

There are also tests which are given to older children, asking them to locate on a globe or map places of importance in Bible history or in the missionary work of the church, and tests which ask them to trace the journeys of the children of Israel or of Paul.

Such tests as these are useful in helping teachers to check up on the methods they have used to teach these facts, and to know to what extent the boys and girls have responded to these methods. They are also generally interesting to the boys and girls.

### Testing Memory Work

There is a real reason why boys and girls should memorize great passages from the Bible. As we have seen, the teaching of these passages should be related to the experience of the children, and the method of teaching should be in keeping with the thought of the passage. To drill on memory passages in a mechanical fashion and then to test each child by asking him to "repeat" the memory verse may be useless.

The custom in some church schools of having each child repeat a certain number of memory verses for "promotion with honor" would seem to be of questionable value. Rather, to test one's teaching, recall the materials in services and situations where they are helpful, and if the children really know the passages, they will recall them and be able to repeat them.

### Testing Attitudes and Standards

But though facts and memory work are important, they are not the most important learnings which a teacher of religion seeks to stimulate. There are responses of the boys and girls in the area of ideas, attitudes, likes and dislikes, and values, which are even more significant.

In the social studies in the schools, there have been developed tests which seek to find out how the pupil feels about situations and persons, what he likes and dislikes, what he considers important and unimportant. For example, he is asked to list, in the order of his preference, four books or pictures or musical selections with which he has become familiar. He is asked to select, out of a list of historical personages, the one he would most enjoy meeting in the here and now. He is asked to list, in the order of importance, three rules about the care of school property, or to select the best answer out of three possible ways of meeting a problem in playground games.

Religious education knows that in the attitudes and conduct of the pupils there is found an important answer to the question of how influential religious education has been in the lives of the children. The tests in this field are not nearly so easy to prepare, nor so easily interpreted as in the field of information. Either Jesus did or did not live as a boy in Palestine. It is simple to find out whether or not a pupil knows the right answer to the question. But when it comes to finding out whether a pupil really does love his neighbor as himself, this is quite a different matter. No simple test can find the answer. But because these tests, when carefully planned, do throw some light on the matter, they may be useful to the teacher and helpful to the pupil.

In the second grade of a church school, the boys and girls had been working on a unit in the field of human relationships, "Having Friends and Being Friendly." At the con-

clusion of the study, the leader gave each of the children a picture of a childlife activity. One showed a child being left out of the group, and evidencing unhappiness; one showed a policeman holding up a "stop" signal to a group of children while automobiles were going past; one showed a "new child" moving into a neighborhood, while the neighborhood children looked on; one showed a Chinese child walking alone on the sidewalk while a group of other children were playing just ahead of her; one showed a gardener-neighbor tending his flowers while children were looking over the fence; one showed a group of children with an empty wagon and a woman loaded with a heavy bag of groceries. The leader asked each child to study his picture quietly for a while and to select one child in the picture to be "himself." When each child had indicated his picture, the teacher asked each one to tell what he thought that child would do if he really wanted to be friendly. The results of this test showed that the children had a good idea of friendly conduct.

In a sixth grade, the boys and girls had been studying a unit on "Learning to Follow Jesus." The sessions had been planned around incidents from the life of Jesus in which he taught his disciples through example. At the conclusion of the unit, the leader planned a test. She selected seven present-day situations common in the lives of her own group which represented somewhat the same basic problems in human relations as those about which they had been studying. These were typed and given to the pupils. They were to consider each of these situations, and tell how they thought Jesus would have met it.

A group of younger juniors had been studying "Heroes of the Bible," in which they had come to know something of the life and contribution of some of the great men of old. When the study was ended, the boys and girls were given a test planned to find out what they thought of the various persons. They were asked to select from the



list of characters studied the one who was bravest when he had to stand for the right against others, also the one who was most generous. In a similar group, the children were asked to tell the story of their favorite hero, thus giving opportunity to test their knowledge of the facts of his life, and also to discover whether or not they appreciated the character.

Such tests are helpful, not only to the leader in checking up on the teaching, but also to the boys and girls in giving them an opportunity to review and summarize their learnings, and so to clarify their thinking. In answering the questions, they think about the characters from another angle, one which gives them a view of each character in comparison with every other and centers attention on standards and character values.

### Testing Specifically Religious Attitudes

Beyond the attitudes in human relationships there are the basic attitudes toward God and his purposes. Here lies the core of religious education. And here we are in a realm in which it is difficult to evaluate the results of teachings.

Dr. Grigg-Smith and Dr. Jean Piaget<sup>1</sup> made extended studies several years ago of the religious ideas of children which have thrown a great deal of light upon the problems of teachers of religion. For example, Grigg-Smith asked such questions as: "How does God help us to be good?" "Does God punish us if we are not good?" It is, indeed, shocking to teachers to hear children who have been taught the Christian religion since early childhood saying, at the age of twelve, "If we try to be good and ask God to help us, he will tempt us just to see if we will go wrong"; or, "If someone does wrong and is sorry, God will forgive her, but he will punish her, like maybe having her baby die."

<sup>1</sup> T. Grigg-Smith, *The Child's Knowledge of God*, Macmillan Company, 1920; and Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Harcourt Brace, 1932.

There are difficulties in asking such general questions of children. They are opinion questions. It is not likely that children will be able to answer them concisely. If they are able to frame answers, it is difficult to know whether the answers are those they have heard from someone else or the expression of their own convictions. If there is friendliness between the child and the adult, it is likely that opportunities will arise for informal expression of opinion which will be more revealing to the adult than more formal answers to questions.

There is, of course, the plan of having children memorize answers which they repeat to questions regarding the nature and purpose of God. This method of the catechism has a history of long and widespread use. There are some teachers who continue to feel that it is a useful way to teach a child religion. It is easy to test the child if this method of teaching is accepted. Most of those who work with children, however, feel that it is likely to give children a formal answer before there has been any experience to make the answer meaningful. They feel that such formal answers are more useful when they come as a summary of what the child has learned through stories and activities and experiences of worship, fellowship, and service.

In any of the tests in this area planned to find out what the child has learned, there is large possibility of error. Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties, it is important to help children to be able to state their faith and give a reason for it. Otherwise, their faith may become so vague as to be meaningless. And so it is necessary to talk over with children their religious ideas, and to ask some specific questions about their faith to which specific answers are to be given.

### THE TEST IN LIFE

If the study of the units on the work of the church, together with the child's experience in his own church, have

given him some real understanding of the place of the church and God's purposes in the world, and of the child's own part in it, he will give evidence of this understanding through the way he participates in the life and work of the church.

If the units on God's purposes in the world together with experiences in working with God have given him some understanding of these purposes he will give evidence of it through the way in which he meets his fellows in the school, in the community, and on the playground.

If the units he has studied on Christian conduct, together with the experience he has had with Christian persons in the home and church, have given him some understanding of the Christian way of life, he will give evidence of this understanding in the way he shares and takes turns, has regard for the happiness of others, resists unfair treatment of minority groups.

If the units he has studied on Christian worship, together with the experience he has had of worship in the home and church, have given him some understanding of the meaning and values of worship, he will give evidence of this understanding through his own personal devotions, and through his participation in the worship of the family and church groups.

### THE TEST OF COMMITMENT

The goal of Christian education is to help each child, as he grows in stature and in wisdom, to grow also in the understanding of the purposes of God as revealed in Christ Jesus, and in commitment to these purposes.

With a four-year-old, this commitment may be expressed through loving God, thanking him, and trying to "be good," as he understands it. He will ask God to help him to remember not to be noisy when Grandmother is taking a nap, or to remember to pick up his toys, or to let other children have turns in the swing. He may be helped to

come increasingly to recognize that people are happier if they help rather than hurt one another; if they sometimes share rather than seek always to take the best for themselves; if they have regard for the interests and pleasures of others as well as their own. When this child does not share or cooperate, he will be helped to see for himself that this is not a good way to behave, and so to come to be sorry. He will be helped to understand that God knows what is best for all people and that, as people come to know what God wishes them to do and try to do it, they will all be happier. He can be led to understand that God helps people to be good and to wish to pray for this help.

The leader in Christian education will recognize that modern psychology has suggested the dangers of expecting too much too soon in the way of unselfish conduct on the part of children. He will take counsel with those who have made careful studies over long periods of time of the limitations and abilities of little children, and so will be patient while the little child grows a self, knowing that he cannot be unselfish until he is a self.

The leader in Christian education will know that a child should be protected from the oppression of a burden too heavy for him to bear in requirements of concern for others. And that he should not be too early laden with a sense of guilt in his recognition of failure to "be good," nor expected to feel too great a sense of penitence. But progress may be expected.

As the children move from the kindergarten into the primary department, they may be helped to become aware of the fact that they are growing up! And so they may become ready to accept larger responsibilities for their own conduct and for the welfare of others. Through the work of the primary department, children can come to know more and more about the purposes of God. They can study these purposes, and can see these purposes being carried out in the Christian family, through the Christian Church,

and in the everyday life of individual Christians. They can come increasingly to know that persons are dependent upon each other and that what one does affects others. They can come to see more clearly what it is that makes other people happy. They can come to feel fellowship with God through enjoying the beauty and the good gifts which his world affords, and to express their gratitude through prayer and worship. They can come to know the story of the life of Jesus, what he did and how he helped people, and how he loved God and did what God wanted him to do. They can begin to know how they can live as Jesus taught men to live, and to think of their personal conduct in the light of the example and teaching of Jesus. They can begin to think of right as being that which helps people and is in harmony with God's plans for men, and wrong as that which hurts people and is contrary to God's plans for men. The older primary child in specific situations can recognize when he has done wrong, feel sorry for it, ask forgiveness, and seek to make amends.

As children leave the primary department, they may participate in a service in their own room in which they review with their leaders what they have learned of the purposes of God, and express in a simple service of dedication their desire and purpose to live in accordance with these purposes. This service should be dignified, but not oppressively solemn, leaving the children with a sense of the joy of growth, and a deepened consciousness of the help of God in living their everyday lives as he would have them live.

During the junior years, the boys and girls develop rapidly, and they may grow also in the understanding of the Christian faith and in making it their own. Because they have had more experience and know about cause and effect, they can understand more fully what their actions mean to others. They can see how they hurt or help others, and can, in imagination, understand what will happen



before they do it. They can thus exercise larger control over their conduct than can younger children.

They can know in detail the life of Jesus and can understand, much more fully than can younger children, the significance of what he did and of his standards. They can come to know that persons were more important to him than money or position or power or comfort. They can come to know that doing the will of God was so important to him that nothing, not even the cruel suffering of the Cross, could turn him from it for a moment. And so they can come to some understanding of the meaning of sin in the world, the refusal of men to do the will of God. They can come to recognize the tendencies to sin in their own lives, and to wish to overcome them. They can come to know how the love of God, through Jesus Christ, can overcome the sin and bring them into fellowship with God as they commit themselves to the doing of his will.

Toward the end of the junior years, it is likely that the child who has been nurtured in the Christian home and church will be ready for a more formal commitment than has been planned for younger children. Perhaps he is ready to assume the vows of full responsibility as a member of his church; perhaps this ceremony may be reserved for adolescent years. But certainly, at this point in his Christian growth, he should be given the opportunity to summarize what he has learned about the meaning of the Christian faith in present-day life and to commit himself to a life in this faith.

The practice of the various Christian churches varies in regard to the service of commitment for boys and girls. But whatever the practice, the service should be planned so that it will help the boys and girls recognize that they are taking a serious and important step, one which will have far-reaching influence upon everything they plan and do in the future. It should be planned so that the entire church fellowship recognizes that such commitment on the

part of boys and girls is an important event in the life of the church, one in which they all rejoice.

If the program of Christian education has interpreted to these boys and girls the love and righteousness of God, and his purposes for man as these have been revealed through Jesus Christ, if it has so lifted up Jesus that he may be heard above the noise of selfish strife, that he may be seen beyond the glitter of worldly goods, if it has offered them through the church fellowship in Christian discipleship, if it has brought them to the point of joyous commitment of their lives to the doing of the will of God on earth, then Christian education has fulfilled its appointed task.

# Appendices

## A.

### GENERAL RESOURCES

THERE ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE DENOMINATIONAL AND INTER-denominational boards of Christian education many useful pamphlets covering all phases of the religious education of children and offering excellent specific help to parents and teachers. Because these pamphlets are continually revised to keep them fresh and up-to-date, it is not advisable to list them by titles in a book. Teachers and parents are invited to keep closely in touch with their denominational headquarters and with their city or state council of religious education or the International Council of Religious Education, asking regularly for new material on any aspect of religious education. Pamphlets are available on such subjects as family worship, the use of the Bible with children, planning worship services, selecting and using stories, enterprises in world-wide service, recommended hymn books for various age groups, how to use visual aids, and the like.

## B.

*A dramatic telling of the story of Jesus, developed by the fifth grade. The children wore simple costumes. (For lack of space, only a part of the program is quoted.)*

### THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS REMEMBER HIM

DEMMY: One day, when I was sitting with Jesus at the Temple steps, some of the rich people were putting money into the box.

CAROL: I have seen them, too. They're very proud and stuffy. They make a loud noise to call attention to their gifts, and they look around to be sure that people are watching.

MALCOLM: They often get the money in dishonest ways, like

the tax collectors who collect more than they should, or the scribes who sell a widow's property.

DEMMY: But on this day, a poor widow came and put in two small coins, which was what she had saved for a long time.

JOAN: Then the widow gave more than all the rest, because she gave it out of love for God.

CHORUS: Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

DEMMY: But there were some other tax collectors who were sorry they had taken money wrongly.

CAROL: Yes, Zacchaeus became a friend of Jesus.

ZOLTON: And he gave back the money he had taken wrongly and he shared his goods with the poor.

DEMMY: Jesus caused people to want to change. He made them want to do things that were honest and truthful.

JOAN: The rich young ruler wanted to be a disciple, too, but when Jesus asked him to give some of his wealth away, he walked away sadly.

MALCOLM: And we really don't know what happened to him. I wonder if he ever decided to become a follower. He seemed very thoughtful as he went away.

CHORUS: If anyone says "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also. (I John 4:20-21.)

MALCOLM: Jesus was always eager to listen to children. He thought they were important, too.

CAROL: I remember one day the disciples wanted to send the children away because Jesus was busy.

MALCOLM: But Jesus said, "Let the children come unto me. I have time for them, too."

CHORUS: "Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him

who sent me. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Mark 9:37; Mark 10:15.)

DEMMY: Why do you suppose Jesus had enemies? He wanted to be friends and to help people.

CAROL: Well, the Pharisees always wanted to trick him.

JOAN: They didn't like the things he taught, because he didn't teach like they did.

CAROL: They wanted to get rid of him because so many people followed him. They wanted to be the great religious leaders.

ZOLTON: There was one day when they tried to make him prove he was the leader God had promised.

CAROL: Jesus refused to give any special sign. He was sure what he was saying was true and did not need this kind of proof.

ZOLTON: Jesus wanted men to believe in God and work with him.

CAROL: The Pharisees wanted men to obey laws.

MALCOLM: Jesus knew the law, too, and they were not able to trick him.

CAROL: One day his disciples were tired and hungry and they plucked some grain and ate it. The Pharisees objected because it was the Sabbath and no work was to be done. But Jesus reminded them that one of their leaders had given the people the bread which only the priests were to eat. And Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

CHORUS: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done without neglecting the others. (Matthew 23:23.)

JOAN: Jesus had a way of making you feel you were of great value. He had faith and confidence in people.

DEMMY: Yes, he made you want to live up to the best that was in you, and to do what God expected of you.

CAROL: There was a great need for more respect for people.

JOAN: The rich people often showed scorn for the poor and seemed to think they were not worth anything.

ZOLTON: And almost everyone thought people were sick be-



cause they had been bad and God was punishing them. They said evil spirits were living in them.

JOAN: Jesus was able to restore confidence and take away fear. He made people feel that he was their friend and he told them about God's love.

ZOLTON: Jesus didn't care how much money a person had. It was how he felt in his heart that really mattered.

JOAN: He taught us to show kindness and love by sharing with those who were in need, by helping the sick.

DEMMY: And loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

MALCOLM: And we show love not just in word and speech, but in deed and truth. We don't just talk about it. We do something to help.

CHORUS: If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? (I John 17-18.)

ZOLTON: Jesus talked with people on the mountain side, along the Sea of Galilee, and in the village streets.

DEMMY: As he passed through the villages, people gathered to hear him.

ZOLTON: It was easy for Jesus to talk with people. He seemed to know just what to say. Sometimes they asked him questions, and instead of giving an answer, he told a story.

DEMMY: Oh, yes—do you remember the lawyer who asked, "But who is my neighbor?" Jesus told him a story he could never forget.

ZOLTON: Why don't you tell us the story?

CAROL: Yes, do tell it for us.

DEMMY: A man was going down the lonely road that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers who beat him and carried away his goods. Now, by chance, a priest was going down that road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So, likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw the man, there was love in his heart. He bound the wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his donkey and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he paid the inn keeper, saying, "Take care of him; and

whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." And Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of these three do you think proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The Samaritan who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

CAROL: The man had thought his neighbor was the person who lived next door, or one who agreed with him in religion.

JOAN: Then it doesn't matter who the person is, nor where he lives. We should show love whenever there is anyone in need.

MALCOLM: The priests and Levites did not like this story. They were afraid of what the people would think. How dared he compare them with a Samaritan?

CHORUS: For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (The program continues the life and teachings of Jesus.)

## C.

### SOME POEMS AND PRAYERS COMPOSED BY BOYS AND GIRLS

#### NO ONE HAS SEEN GOD

No one has seen God, but we have seen his work,  
When bread with others we do share,

He is there;

When we look upon a tree so fair,

He is there;

When we know a mother's care,

He is there.

No one has seen God, but we have seen his work,  
When we ask for help in prayer,

He is there;

When soft words of peace are in the air,

He is there;

Near us in dark days or fair,

He is there.

## OUR CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Dear God, help us to be more like Jesus.  
Help us to be kind to others.  
Help us to make changes in other people,  
By teaching them to do what is right;  
By helping people who are in trouble;  
By helping Mother and Father;  
By helping people who are sick;  
By sharing with others;  
By helping with little brother or sister;  
By helping the blind;  
By going to the store for people,  
And shoveling walks and mowing grass;  
By helping our teachers  
And helping little children cross the street.  
Help us to remember to put out food  
For animals in the wintertime,  
And to help animals when they are hurt.  
Help us to remember that Jesus said:  
"Every person is important in making a happy world."  
And when we remember to do all this,  
Our own Christmas will be happier. Amen.

Grade 3

## OUR FATHER, WE THANK THEE

For the world in which we live,  
For the sun that gives us heat,  
For the water we can drink,  
For grass, and trees, and flowers,

*Our Father, we thank thee.*

For fire that cooks our food,  
For leaves that make good soil,  
For crops that grow from the earth,  
For animals that give us food and fur,

*Our Father, we thank thee.*

For inventions that make life better,  
For people in history who built our country,

For pilgrims who were friends with the Indians,  
For miners who give us coal,  
For nurses and doctors who help the sick,  
For people who are kind and who think of others,  
*Our Father, we thank thee.*

For Jesus who taught us about God,  
For Bibles that teach us about early people,  
For churches where we go to worship,  
For churches where we learn Jesus' way of life,  
*Our Father, we thank thee.*

### MIRACLES ALL AROUND US

Is it not a miracle that birds can build a nest  
And find food for their babies?

Where do they get their song?

Is it not a miracle that beautiful flowers

Can grow from tiny seeds;

And nourishing food can be grown from seeds

So hungry children can be made well again?

Is it not a miracle that a chicken can pick its way out of a shell?

That a moth comes from a cocoon?

That a fish learns to swim?

That snakes and frogs grow new skins?

That baby animals are born?

Is it not a miracle how people first came to be?

And how babies can learn to walk and talk?

Is it not a miracle that Jesus learned so much from God,

And that his disciples carried on his work?

Is it not a miracle that surgeons can perform so many wonderful  
operations?

And that scientists discover so many things?

Is it not a miracle that people can go into strange countries,  
breaking new roads,

To bring new hope to others?

"Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend." Job  
37:5b.

## PEACE

Peace means quiet times;  
Peace means happy times;  
Peace means food for hungry people.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

Peace means all countries are friends;  
Peace means people getting together to talk over their troubles;  
Peace means the strong nations take care of the weak.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

Peace means everyone is happy;  
Peace means no quarrels;  
Peace means good neighbors.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

Peace means work for everyone;  
Peace means no more cripples made by war;  
Peace means all the world like one big family.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*

Primary Department, Vacation School

## A POEM OF THANKS AT EASTER TIME

For flowers that bloom again,  
For birds that come back when winter is gone,  
For grass that starts turning green,  
For the sunshine so warm and bright,  
For the budding of trees in the spring,

*We thank thee, God.*

For the love of Jesus,  
For the kindness he showed to others,  
For the way he helped folks to be brothers,  
For the trust he had in the goodness in people,  
For the way he showed us to worship thee,

*We thank thee, God.*



For the love that lives on in people today,  
For the beauty we see in the world all about us,  
For friends and finding new ways of being friends,  
For the happiness we know all through the year,  
For the gift of life that goes on and on,

*We thank thee, God.*

Grade 4

## D.

### AN EASTER SERVICE

#### WE REMEMBER JESUS

LEADER: We remember the boyhood of Jesus, when his inquiring mind made him want to seek out the teachers in the Temple to discover more about God.

PEOPLE: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

LEADER: We remember Jesus' stories of forgiveness like the Prodigal Son, his stories of friendship like the Good Samaritan; and the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep, which tell of the love of God.

PEOPLE: Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks, receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

LEADER: We remember Jesus, who loved all people equally, like Zacchaeus the tax collector, Mary and Martha who were housekeepers, his disciples who were average men, the sick and poor people to whom he gave sympathy, and little children whom he was never too tired to enjoy.

PEOPLE: (God) makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

LEADER: We remember Jesus who believed in sincere secret prayer instead of blood sacrifice, in good thoughts and actions instead of ceremony, in how you felt inside instead of praying on the street corners like the hypocrites, in a God of love who works through people instead of tragedy and cruelty.

PEOPLE: So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your

gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

LEADER: We remember Jesus, who, facing his death bravely, would rather die than have his ideas forgotten.

PEOPLE: We remember his last prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

LEADER: We remember Jesus, who died at this season of the year, and who gave to the world God's love, and showed the relationship between man and God as no other person has.

PEOPLE: We think of the words of the Bible, "We know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

OFFERING: For the American Junior College, Beirut, Lebanon. Books for Friends Boys School, Ramallah, Palestine.

OFFERING RESPONSE: "We Give Thee but Thine Own."

PRAYER: Our Father, we pray to thee in song and word on this great day of memory of Jesus, who gave his life for humanity so that his teachings would go on and on. As we think of him, we know what you are like through the way that Jesus taught us to pray and to treat all people lovingly. We remember the Easter message of the way that Jesus' teachings returned so strongly to his followers on that morning that seemed so bright following the days of sadness. We rejoice that we can share this message, too, as we give to the Friends school in Ramallah and to the American College in Beirut so that these people, too, may learn more about the good life as taught by Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE: "Alleluia."

HYMN: "O Young and Fearless Prophet."

A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

POSTLUDE.

Prepared by Grade 7

### A LITANY OF PRAISE

VOICES OF CHOIR: Praise ye Jehovah!

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

CHOIR: Praise, O ye servants of Jehovah,  
Praise the name of Jehovah.

Blessed be the name of Jehovah;

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the  
same

Jehovah's name is to be praised.

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

CHOIR: Jehovah is high above all nations,  
And his glory is above the heavens.

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

CHOIR: O give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good;  
For his lovingkindness endureth forever.

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

CHOIR: Let Israel now say,  
That his lovingkindness endureth forever.

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

CHOIR: Thou art our God, and we will give thanks unto thee;  
Thou art our God, we will exalt thee.  
O give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;  
For his lovingkindness endureth forever.

PEOPLE: Praise ye Jehovah!

## E.

### SOURCES OF LISTS OF BOOKS FOR CHILDREN'S READING AND FOR STORYTELLING

*Watch the periodicals for the home published by your denomination for lists of books. These will be found also in your teacher's periodical and undated manual.*

The United States Children's Bureau issues yearly a list of books for children, representing a careful selection covering wide range of interests, annotated, and classified by interests and ages. Order from the Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

The Association for Childhood Education keeps an up-to-date list of books, also classified and annotated, "A Bibliography of Books for Children." Order from the Association for Childhood Education, National Education Association Building, Washington, D. C.

The American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., has compiled a special book list for human understanding called "Reading Ladders for Human Understanding," which annotates

by age groups books which are helpful in developing inter-group and interracial understanding. Order from the American Council of Education, Washington, D. C.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews prepares a list of books for children each year, selected especially to help develop good will among cultural and racial groups, called "Reading for Democracy." It may be ordered without cost from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 203 North Wabash Ave., Chicago 1, Ill.

The International Council of Religious Education has a brief list of religious books for children entitled, "A Child's Religious Library."

The Child Study Association prepares an annual list, "Books of the Year for Children." Order from the Child Study Association, New York.

Your own denominational board of education can provide up-to-date information on this subject.

## F.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR TEACHERS

#### 1. Understanding Children

Bert J. Beverly, *Psychology of Growth*.

Marguerite Harmon Bro, *When Children Ask*.

Doris Metcalf, *Bringing Up Children*.

Angelo Patri, *How to Help Your Child Grow Up*.

Torgeneon, *Studying Children*.

Ruth Strang, *A Study of Young Children*.

#### 2. Teaching Children

May Adams, *Educating America's Children*.

Wesner Fallaw, *The Modern Parent and the Teaching Church*.

A. Gordon Melvin, *Teaching*.

Arnold Gesell

#### 3. Using the Arts

*The Arts and Children's Living*, pamphlet edited by the Association for Childhood Education.

Natalie R. Cole, *The Arts in the Classroom*.

William S. Hocking, *Projected Visual Aids in the Church*.



Evelyn H. Hunt, *Music Time*.

Marion A. Marrow, *Games for Younger Children*.

H. O. Oldham, *Child Expression in Color*.

Rebecca Rice, *Creative Activities*.

4. Fine Art and Literature for Children

Mary Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*.

Harriett B. Barbour and Warren S. Freeman, *The Children's Record Book*.

Anna M. Berry, *Art for the Children*.

Maud I. Oliver, *First Steps in the Enjoyment of Pictures*.

Jean L. Smith, *Great Art and Children's Worship*.

5. For the Teacher's Inspiration and Enrichment

Minner Burrows, *Outline of Biblical Theology*.

Georgia Harkness, *Understanding the Christian Faith*.

Mary Alice Jones, *The Faith of Our Children*.

Ralph E. Knudson, *Christian Beliefs*.

Park Hays Miller, *Christian Doctrines for Sunday School Teachers*.

H. F. Rall, *The Meaning of God*.

G. W. Mackie, *Bible Manners and Custom*.

## G.

### AIDS TO FAMILY WORSHIP

*The Christian Home*, a monthly magazine, The Graded Press, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tennessee. Annual subscription rate \$2.00. Contains a special section, "Devotions for the Family," carrying daily suggestions, with some hymns with music, and poems "For Use with Young Children."

*Hearthstone*, a magazine issued by several leading denominations.

*Pages of Power for Family Living*, International Council of Religious Education, 206 S. Michigan Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois. Price 10 cents. Interesting facts and people suggested by Bible readings with quiz questions to stimulate discussion after reading. Order from your own denomination.

*Children's Prayers for Every Day*, Jessie Eleanor Moore, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$1.00. Prayers, some for younger children,





1 1012 01040 3014

# Guiding Children in Christian Growth

by MARY ALICE JONES

FOR EVERY PARENT AND TEACHER concerned with the religious nurture of children, at home and in the church, this book offers tested principles and practical methods for guiding children in Christian growth.

These chapters, prepared for reading and discussion, are based on clear, sympathetic understanding of children and of the teacher's role as friend and guide. Nontechnical, rich in illustrations, they deal specifically and helpfully with vital factors in the child's religious development—the nature of growth; the interests, needs, and capacities of beginner, primary, and junior groups; making adjustments within the family; organizing and conducting a church school; how to select and use teaching material. The Appendices include reading suggestions and sources of materials. Here is new understanding of growing children and dependable aid in guiding them along the Christian Way.

## *The Chapters*

THE GROWING CHILD  
THE FAITH WE TEACH  
LEARNING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP—IN THE FAMILY  
LEARNING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP—IN THE CHURCH  
LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVITIES  
LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS  
LEARNING THROUGH WORSHIP  
USING PREPARED LESSON MATERIALS  
THE TEACHER AND THE CHURCH SCHOOL GROUP  
EVALUATING THE RESULTS OF TEACHING

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS